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investigates the 'balanced'
council the Alliance isn't
proud of



1984 AND ALL THAT

As the first three volumes of
the new collected Orwell come
out, BERNARD CRICK
wonders about publishing's
recycling industry

Another guru is foisted upon us . . .

ECONOMISTS — practitioners of Thomas Carlyle's 'dismal science' — bear heavy collective guilt for what we have suffered under Mrs Thatcher and her pair of Chancellors of the Exchequer.

Keynes in his *General Theory* (which, of course, was not really a 'general theory', but a particular theory of what to do in a condition of high unemployment and large unused resources, i.e. like Britain today) commented: 'Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist'. In the case of this government, things are several degrees worse. For not only have the notions of *defunct* economists been taken over and asserted as gospel truth, but the improbable propositions of some of the loonier *living* economists have also been absorbed and woven into that mix of dogma in action for which most of the people have been fooled into thinking There Is No Alternative.

The responsibility of economists lies in the fact that collectively they know perfectly well that there is no empirical evidence to support the central economic assertions that Thatcher, Howe, Lawson and their acolytes have been pouring over us for seven years. Yet, having once elegantly proven, say, that Friedman's theories about the relationship between money supply and inflation lack logic and that his data supporting them fail to do so, they have effectively abandoned the field of public policy entirely.

All this was encapsulated in two sentences of Chancellor Lawson's Budget speech last week:

... the government's policies are unchanged . . . : policies of sound money and free markets.

Not least because these are the only routes to more jobs — and jobs that last.

Much is swept up in those non sequiturs, uttered with such unhesitating confidence. Included are: Milton Friedman's views on monetary policy and inflation (even if in a later section of his speech, without any indication that he was contradicting every Budget strategy since 1979, Lawson said that a huge increase above target in the money supply 'has not posed a threat to inflation'; and Léon Walras (French d.1910), who produced a mathematical model of an economy in 'general equilibrium' ('jobs that last'), but only on the unreal assumption of competition so perfect ('free markets') that no producer and no consumer has any personal influence on prices; and Patrick Minford of Liverpool University, who still quaintly asserts a theory of 'rational expectations' under which, if the government declares what will happen to inflation, everything else in the economy adjusts automatically, but who remains coy about allowing other economists to examine the methodology of his forecasting model; and also Arthur Laffer (American), who once drew a curve to suggest that lowering taxes would *increase* tax revenues because the act would create something dynamic called 'an enterprise culture'.

Nigel Lawson has added a new American guru to this *galère* — Martin L. Weitzman from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Weitzman's nostrum is that, if in the private sector up to a fifth of a wage packet could be in the form of profit sharing, so that it did not have to be paid at all when things get rough, there would be much more 'flexibility' in the labour market.

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NSI

The idea is attractive to Lawson for two reasons. The first is that he has to find some plausible explanation of the fact that, after seven years of the Tory economic medicine that was originally supposed to work in three, the British economy is still performing so badly. (The IMF's latest figures forecast UK growth rate dropping even further to 2 per cent in 1987.) 'Inflexibility in the labour market', he thinks fits well as an excuse.

The second reason is that the government has the ambition of making the British people into 'a nation of share-owners'. That is a political, not an economic ambition. It is based on the assumption that those who own shares, like those who own mortgages, become socially and politically more conservative. As Weitzman himself was quoted as saying: 'I guess in the hands of a good politician, it could have appeal to the public . . . At worst it can do no harm'. In Lawson's hands, be warned, Weitzman in 1986 will be turned into the latest magic solution to the ills of the British economy. ☐

... and government by a share-dealer

IF WE MIGHT make so bold as to offer Mrs Thatcher a piece of disinterested political advice, it is that in her next reshuffle she should replace her press secretary, Mr Bernard Ingham. The man has obviously been under strain for some time and the Maggie share-dealing scandal seems to have sent him right over the top.

The lobby system, whereby the government's propaganda line gets unattributably transmogrified into actual news via daily briefings that 'never took place' only works if there is a minimum of civility and trust between all those who are party to the conspiracy. But over Broken Hill, our informants tell us, Ingham has been quite out of control, biting off the heads of ordinary, decent working hacks and attacking their 'dirty minds' when they were just putting their simple, professional and factual questions. Insiders say that much of the Prime Minister's bad press over the whole affair is down to Ingham. The same, incidentally, was true of her very bad press over the Westland affair. In any event, the head of propaganda and misinformation at No. 10 is far too central a figure in the campaign to restore the government's electoral fortunes for it to be left in the hands of a man who appears to have cracked.

The golden rule of PR at tight moments like Broken Hill is to tell the whole truth at once. 'The rules governing ministerial conduct have been meticulously observed', the machine duly intoned. The only trouble with that line is that the rules are only contained in a confidential government document, and are supposed to be secret.

Luckily, however, the NS was able to help last month, when a copy in a plain brown envelope fell into our hands. 'Ministers', we revealed on 28 February, 'should scrupulously avoid speculative investments in securities about which they have, or may be thought to have, early or confidential information likely to affect the price of those securities'. Broken Hill has always been pretty speculative and in such circumstances the rules lay down that the 'Prime Minister of the day must be the final judge'. Quite why the 'Prime Minister of the day' advised Mrs Thatcher a year ago to stop dealing in the shares personally is very unclear.

Overriding everything is the principle 'that Ministers must so order their affairs that no conflict arises, or appears to arise, between their private interests and their public duties'. The problem here is that this Prime Minister has never understood such a principle. Denis can use No. 10 notepaper to push along planning applications in which he is interested; Mark can be given a business leg up by mum when she is fulfilling public duties in Oman. Since, presumably, Mrs Thatcher simply thinks she was batting for Britain when she made her capital gain on Broken Hill, it makes Mr Ingham's unattributable job very difficult for him. ☐

THIN END OF THE WEDGE FOR PRIVATE POWER?

A LARGE scale private power scheme being considered for Northern Ireland could pave the way for the wholesale privatisation of the UK's electricity industry.
ROB EDWARDS reports

THE NORTHERN Ireland Economic Development Office is currently looking at plans from five private consortia to build a £500 million power station in the province based on Lignite, a low grade of coal.

If built, the station would be the UK's first major venture into private power production. It would be sited at the mouth of a new mine extracting some of the province's reportedly substantial Lignite deposits. Provisional prospecting licences have been granted for three areas — Ardbo in East Tyrone, Ballymoney in Antrim and Lough Beg near Crumlin.

According to the *Financial Times*' European Energy Report, the government is due to make a decision on whether to proceed with full-scale feasibility studies later this year. Although the public utility, the Northern Ireland Electricity Service, has prepared its own plans, the

current favourite to build the station is the Antrim Power Company, a consortium including the Hanson Trust, Bechtel International and some local firms, and headed by Sir Desmond Lorimar, an important local industrialist. Antrim Power is believed to already be discussing possible arrangements with two of the mining companies involved, BP coal and Anglo United Development.

The modernisation of Northern Ireland's generating system based on four publicly-owned fossil fuel stations is long overdue. The cost of producing electricity is one of the highest in Europe and has to be subsidised to the tune of about £70 million a year by Westminster.

The idea of privatising the UK's main public utility, the CEBG, is thought to be on the Tory agenda should they win the next election. CEBG Chair, Lord Marshall, has said he wouldn't mind his organisation being sold off.

If the Northern Ireland model were to be copied on the mainland, the mine mouth coal-fired power stations in Yorkshire and at Longannet in Scotland could be put up for sale. Such a move would undoubtedly face fierce opposition from the Labour and trade union movement.

Miniscule crumb of comfort for doomed councillors

JOHN BANHAM, head of the Audit Commission, thinks that the law should be changed to avoid bankruptcy for councillors, and intends to say so at the Local Government conference in April. That's the one very tiny piece of good news available to Liverpool's Labour group. The bad news is that the District Auditor is about to come back with a bill for another million pounds based on the loss of interest on the Rate Support Grant held back until the rate was set.

This makes it certain that the councillors will appeal to the House of Lords. They don't expect to win, but it now seems worth the gamble — and failure to do so would leave other Labour councillors exposed to similar penalties from the District Auditors.

In Liverpool itself the havoc continues. The council is going for the

maximum permissible rate rise, 16 per cent. While pledging no cuts in jobs and services, there is no actual budget. Instead, Tony Byrne, the finance chair who inspired much of last year's budget debacle, will be monitoring all spending on a day to day basis. Liberal councillors, who have moved similar non-budgets in the past, putting the shortfall down to 'unallocated cuts', were reduced to calling for the resignation of Labour councillors without putting forward any alternative budget. But if they defeated the Labour proposals without proposing an alternative budget, they could face penalties themselves.

The legality of the non-budget depends on Byrne's good housekeeping producing cuts of over £27 million — and it's difficult to see how that can be achieved with 'no cuts in jobs and services'. Militant's solution to the apparently unbridgeable gap is typically vague. It is, in Derek Hatton's words, 'a campaign the likes of which we've never seen before'. But the likelihood is that it won't be Labour's problem anyway. It will be a financial time-bomb ticking under the Liberals and Tories.

Ian Williams



Some 100 women gathered at Greenham Common on Saturday to protest about the 'zapping' which they suspect is being used against the peace campers outside the base. The women believe that some form of electromagnetic radiation is being directed against them and is responsible for many of their number reporting a series of illnesses over the past year. Women at the base on Saturday were asked to wear symbolic 'protective' tin foil on their heads. 'It didn't feel too comfortable,' said one.

Robin Forbes

83% of trade unionists vote for Labour

ONLY 39 per cent of trade unionists voted Labour in the 1983 election. But more than double this figure have voted to keep their political funds — which provide nearly three quarters of the national Labour Party's income.

UCATT (construction workers), whose ballot result was announced last week, two weeks before the government's deadline expired, was the last of the 37 trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party to declare a huge majority in favour of keeping its fund.

Seven million trade union members have had the chance to vote, of whom half did so — turnout averaging 60 per cent in workplace ballots and under 40 per cent in postal votes. The average 'yes' vote has been 83 per cent.

In workplace or mainly workplace ballots just under 50 per cent of the whole 'electorate' voted 'yes' — a remarkable result. (The government itself was elected by 42 per cent of the poll and only 31 per cent of the electorate.)

Highest 'yes' votes came from the train drivers ASLEF (93 per cent),

health service workers COHSE (93 per cent) and construction workers UCATT (91 per cent), although the COHSE result was on the lowest turnout (just 40 per cent) of those ballots that had a workplace element. ASLEF and the garment workers' union scored the highest 'yes' votes as a proportion of all their members — 80 per cent of those eligible to vote voting, and voting 'yes'.

So far there have been two ballots to set up new political funds. Both achieved 'yes' votes of over 80 per cent on turnouts of around 90 per cent: the knitwear and hosiery workers and the Inland Revenue Staff Federation — the first civil service union to set up a political fund. Both funds are not to support the Labour Party, but have been set up as an insurance policy against the wide definition of 'political activities' in the 1984 Trade Union Act.

Up to a dozen other unions are likely to set up new political funds in the near future, including two more big civil service unions, the 190,000-strong Civil and Public Services Association and the smaller Civil Service Union. The CPSA had a divisive vote two years ago — lost by 2 to 1 — to affiliate to the Labour Party. Now the government has provided it with the means to conduct political campaigns explicitly in Labour's favour without having to win an affiliation vote.

John Rentoul

Politics of Aids Round-up (4)

Three days of controversy in Washington

The Seventh National Lesbian/Gay Health Conference and Fourth National Aids Forum opened 13 March at George Washington University, Washington, D.C. It drew more than 500 participants from 45 States and ten other countries for three days of intense discussion of issues facing predominantly gay voluntary Aids social service groups. (The first conference, by contrast, sponsored by what is now the National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation, was held in a church basement in the same city in 1978, devoid of any official recognition). The same day that the conference opened, the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), one of its sponsors, issued new advice on preventing the transmission of HTLV-3, the Aids virus. The CDC now recommends voluntary antibody-testing for anyone 'at increased risk' and regulating or closing places, such as gay bathhouses (institutions illegal in Britain), where 'high risk' activities still take place.

Antibody-tests, which show that a person has been exposed to the virus and, in this case, that he or she is probably still infected with it, have now been widely available in the United States for a year. There has been intense controversy over how they should be used, outside blood transfusion services and medical research. Some legislators have proposed, without medical justification, that food-handlers and child-care workers should be barred from employment on the basis of positive antibody test-results.

The CDC statement angered delegates for what it omitted to say. For example, that confidentiality of named medical records is not guaranteed under American law. Federal courts, in particular, may subpoena such information as and when judges see fit. The CDC statement was seen as giving a 'green light' for programmes of voluntary antibody-testing and counselling, funded by States, which were likely to divert funds away from education programmes of proven value, in favour of programmes where the results were easier to quantify, even if far less cost-effective. The conference called for all testing of people 'at risk' to be anonymous and urged non-cooperation in any programme of mass testing which failed to meet that condition.

The conference was dominated by Aids: there was not one session on any other sexually transmitted disease. Even the sessions on alcohol and drug use were Aids-related. It was claimed that gay men are excluded from many treatment programmes; that 'sober sex' is needed before 'safer sex' is possible; that drugs (including inhaled nitrites or 'poppers') could be co-factors for Aids among gay men who are infected with HTLV-3. The only commercial sponsorship of this conference came from the Addiction Research Corporation, which had just opened the world's first inpatient treatment centre, the Pride Institute of Minneapolis, solely devoted to drying out lesbians and gay men.

A new genre of erotic films is being created. On the basis that a picture is worth a thousand words, several groups have made sexually explicit videos promoting 'safer sex' and showing gay men coping with some of the problems this may involve, either with casual partners or regular lovers. Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) of New York has produced a sexually explicit video, 'A Chance of a Lifetime', which shows three gay male couples making love, and features in a major new safer sex campaign. The film had a budget of \$39,000, with \$50,000-worth of services in kind. If those who saw it consider the money better spent than much of the Federal Aids budget, the unfortunate fact is that Federal money is being denied to any 'safer sex' campaign material which is visually explicit, and GMHC itself may yet fall foul of obscenity laws — although their lawyers have worked very hard to protect it as an educational venture, through legally binding agreements that it will only be shown as part of an education programme.

GMHC's film does not only address issues around safer sex, but also goes against prevailing gay male sexual and racial stereotypes. It opens humorously, with a dinner date where the white host — who hasn't had sex for months — is worrying about how to break the news that he wants safer sex with his Black guest who, of course, wouldn't have anything else. Partly as a result of GMHC's efforts, 21 people from 19 organisations put their names to an open letter to makers of gay 'erotic art' movies calling for more evidence of safer sex awareness in their output. This was needed to protect the actors, quite apart from anything it might do for the audience.

Julian Meldrum

London's boroughs 'deport' their homeless



Black homeless families are particularly prone to being shuffled off to the other side of London

THE GREATER London Mobility Scheme, set up by the GLC to enable council tenants to move from one part of London to another, is being used to 'export' homelessness. Homeless families, a high proportion of them Black, are being refused housing in their own boroughs and sent to other areas miles from their families, friends and places of employment.

Among the worst offenders are the Conservative boroughs of Ealing,

Hammersmith, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster, which between them nominated over 35 per cent of the people housed under the mobility scheme last year. Ealing Council, for instance, has adopted criteria which mean that homeless families are unlikely to be housed in the borough unless they have lived there for at least the last three years. Otherwise they are made one offer of accommodation on the mobility scheme, usually in undesirable estates on the opposite side of

London.

In one recent case an Asian man who worked in Ealing was offered a flat in Dagenham, twenty miles away. In another, a young couple were refused housing locally even though they had both been Ealing residents for over twenty years. The fact that they had spent one of the last three years outside the borough boundary was deemed sufficient to justify their removal to Hackney.

Ealing now uses over half its mobility nominations for homeless families — a tenfold increase in only two years. The council admits that 'the vast majority' are Black, though precise figures are unavailable: a GLC attempt to introduce ethnic monitoring failed when a number of Tory boroughs — including Ealing — refused to cooperate.

But misuses of the scheme is not restricted to Conservative boroughs. Islington Council has used it to rehouse occupants of short-life property, who have responded with a 'campaign against deportations'. In Camden, where the entire mobility scheme quota for 1985/86 had been used by the beginning of December, sixty per cent of nominees are now homeless families. The whole of next year's allocation is said to be earmarked for the homeless.

Both boroughs blame their misuse of the scheme on the shortage of alternative accommodation. But the biggest importers of the mobile homeless are boroughs — such as Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and Southwark — which have massive housing problems of their own.

Steve Platt

Brooke babbles to some effect

TWO NEW TWISTS have been introduced into the saga of British Customs interventions in proposed imports of lesbian and gay reading matter (NS 14 March). As a result of a meeting sought by Labour MPs Jo Richardson and Chris Smith, treasury minister Peter Brooke has told Customs to confine itself to random checks of parcels directed to Gay's the Word bookshop, and not to open all parcels.

This is the first time so far as anyone knows that a minister notionally answerable for Customs has troubled to remind them of equitable behaviour. In a second development, Brooke is understood to have called for a legal opinion on the EEC Court ruling of 11 March (Conegate v HMG) that 'obscenity laws cannot be used to keep out of a country goods which can be legally traded within it' to discover whether this has applications to the Gay's the Word Old Bailey case due in October.

In a number of instances, books which Gays The Word sought to import from the US and which Customs has wanted stopped have been published (traded) within the UK without penalty under the obscenity laws.

Andrew Lumsden

REPORTING BACK...

WE LOOK at the recent progress of two controversial bills in Commons Committee stage

Sex, obscenity & children

AFTER four sittings in Committee, Winston Churchill's Obscene Publications bill bears little resemblance to the one that was first debated at second reading.

Clause 1 brings TV and radio within the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, the key phrase being the tendency to 'deprave and corrupt'. Churchill has not explained why this is better than the existing BBC and IBA guidelines. The logic of some of his speeches is that as some children watch the box till any hour, all TV should be suitable for children.

Clause 2 deals with printed material, specifically pictures. 'Dirty' magazines must not be sold to or displayed to be seen by under 18 year olds. If they are, the legal test is their tendency to deprave and corrupt young people. Not a hint in the whole bill to help the jury — what will deprave and corrupt a 17 year old but will do no harm to his or her older brother or sister. Perhaps the older sibling will in future be sent out to do the magazine shopping.

Laboratory animals

THE RADICAL wing of the animal welfare lobby last week suffered a setback in its long war of attrition with the 'respectable' end of the movement. The Commons committee on the Animals (Scientific Procedures) bill voted on Tuesday by nine to seven for a clause that would allow laboratory animals to be 're-used' in more than one experiment. Under the present law, re-use isn't normally allowed; whether it should be in the new legislation has become a major cause of friction between the various factions.

The Home Office at an early stage co-opted and encouraged a 'sensible' alliance between the Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME), the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Committee for the Reform on Animal Experimentation (CRAE). On the advice of CRAE it omitted a re-use clause from its 1985 white paper (having had it in the 1983 white paper), and from the present bill. This was for avowed PR reasons — Home Office minister David Mellor believed there wasn't much chance of being able to present the bill to the public as a 'pro-animal' measure if re-use was permitted. While the bill was in the Lords, the Research Defence Society (RDS — pro-experimentation) tried to get the

It's all a nonsense of course — but what happens now? The bill returns to the floor of the Commons on 25 April for its Report Stage and third reading. Certainly Clare Short will want to table a new clause directed at page 3 of the *Sun* and similar pictures. Yet judging by his comments in committee, Churchill sees nothing wrong with those pictures. Some MPs may try to talk the bill out.

MPs divide into three broad categories on this issue. Some are against censorship at any price; at the other extreme are the Churchill-Whitehouse club; the third group accept there is a problem but define it less hysterically. It is not the extremes of violence but rather the drip-drip effect of a regular diet that deadens sensitivities and values. Perhaps also the daily page 3 pose — 'come and screw me, because I'm a woman and available' — is not totally unrelated to the adjacent and depressing headlines about sexual attacks and rape.

The 1959 Act has few defenders. It is tempting to consider new laws which distinguish between eroticism and obscenity, between art and pornography, and which define how much and what sort of violence is acceptable. The trouble is the differences are often subjective and hard to define in legislative terms. Probably too difficult a task for MPs.

Alf Dubs MP

clause back in, but withdrew when Lord Houghton, CRAE's spokesperson, said that he would not then be able to support the bill.

Remarkably, it was FRAME which suggested Tuesday's amendment. They claim that re-use would mean that 3,000 fewer animals a year would need to be killed. The amendment was actually put forward by Labour MP Maurice Miller, who was being advised by the RDS and who's on the advisory board of the pharmaceutical industry's pressure group, AMRIC. David Mellor abstained and his PPS, Patrick Nicholls, voted against.

Clive Holland of CRAE denies that its apparent disagreement with FRAME means that the 'respectable' alliance is now split: he says that the bill is now so far advanced that PR considerations are less important — and that the important thing is to campaign for more safeguards on the practice.

For the radicals, represented by the Mobilisation for Laboratory Animals, the episode shows that the FRAME/CRAE/BVA alliance is 'nothing more than a front for the vivisection industry'. They argue that the 3,000 animals supposedly saved by re-use are outnumbered by the 17,000 used in cosmetics experiments alone, but complain that when they suggest banning those experiments they are dismissed as fanatics.

See also Scrutiny, p8

Jolyon Jenkins

MISCELLANY

Grave mistakes

A sad little tale from Westminster (the city council, not the palace). Death is set to join the long list of things privatised by Lady Shirley 'Tesco' Porter's efficiency-mad administration (Digression: she recently told a local freesheet that 'I like to think of ratepayers as customers... you can't do business sitting on your arse.'). The council is at this moment negotiating the sale of three cemeteries in the borough to a private company, though it won't say which one. Mystery surrounds one sale — that of Hanwell in Ealing. When it was offered to the local council they turned it down because there was little unused space left.



Westminster insists that agreements on existing graves are to be honoured by new owners, so what on earth is to be done in the tiny space remaining — a monument to Lady Porter perhaps? We also have to report that in one corner of Westminster — Bayswater — Tory councillors' wishes are being deliberately and wilfully flouted. They recently made a great show of insisting that adverts for French lessons and the like be removed from local phone boxes. No sooner had police complied with their instructions than the advertisers were back. Well, you can't do business sitting on your arse.

Baker's goose cooked

Memo to Nick Raynsford. If Kenneth Baker's plans to replace rates with a poll tax go ahead then one of the worst places you could possibly choose to live in is the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Instead of paying an average of £277, you'd pay £510 — an increase of 84 per cent. The figures come from John Gibson of the Institute of Local Government Studies. Feel free to use them as you see fit, Nick.

Old school diet

Old Rugbeians have to undergo many trials in their lives, not the least being umbilically associated with a school whose only famous offspring over the last zillion years are Neville Chamberlain and Tom King. One tribulation they perhaps did not expect was the buff envelope that

dropped through their letterboxes a few weeks ago. Inside, Dear Old Rugbeians were told of the business opportunities of a lifetime (company and indeed job carefully left unspecified) in a badly xeroxed handwritten invitation from Stephen Cobb (Whitelaw House, 1961-65). Miscellany, curiosity alerted, checked with Mr Cobb. The mystery company is HerbaLife, a US-based operation selling 'Herbal' diet remedies through a network of salespeople, inspired by the promise of enormous financial reward at Evangelistic-style gatherings. Rugby itself, when we enquired, was rather sniffy about the idea of its old boys going into Commerce. It made it clear that Mr Cobb did not have the school's sanction and assured us that the Headmaster and the president of the ORs would be writing to him telling him to desist.

Nuclear casualty

Last week's Thames TV Eye programme about Sellafield and the bomb did — as we predicted — a good job of exposing the confusion and deception that characterises official attempts to play down the links between nuclear power and nuclear weapons. (Joan Ruddock of CND, with a fine disregard for the politics of the possible, has demanded that Sir Walter Marshall and the entire CEBG board should resign because they are guilty of a 'corporate lie', and wants an enquiry by Privy Counsellors into the whole issue of the uses of plutonium). All the more sad that one of the major unacknowledged figures behind the programme — and behind the whole controversy in recent years — is now facing an uncertain future. Because of doubt over funding, David Lowry, a researcher with the Open University and the European Proliferation Information Centre, may soon be unemployed.

5 per cent return

Well so far so good, as Nostradamus was wont to mutter in his darker moments. After one week of trading the *New Statesman* Stock Exchange Collection Can project is allowing itself a mild pat on the back. Those altruists who followed our advice and invested their spare cash in selling Paterson Zochonis should now (Tues. a.m.) be able to buy back in and realise a 5 per cent profit for their favourite good cause — War on Want, we suggested. This week's hot tip, in accordance with advice from Grieson Grant, is to buy Booker McConnell shares, which seem to be a good prospect now that they've streamlined their operations. The customary caution: the Stock Exchange is a risky place, so only gamble with money you can afford to lose. And for practical advice on how to do it, approach your bank manager.

SCRUTINY

Duncan Campbell and Patrick Forbes

CONSCRIPTS FOR AMERICAN FORCES PLAN ADMITTED

Government ministers last week acknowledged that a secret 'US-UK lines of Communication Arrangement' does exist — and provides for food, fuel, hospitals, transport and the services of British workers to be provided to the Americans in a crisis. The US Army is also negotiating to take over an NHS hospital in Surrey, intending to 'mothball' it for wartime US use only

MINISTERS admitted that Britain's obligations under the Arrangement with the US include 'civilian manpower support', and that revelations in the *New Statesman* last year (6 and 13 September 1985) about extensive plans to hand over British civilian resources to the US in war were accurate.

Details of the US-UK Lines of Communication (USUKLOC) Arrangement, which was secretly set up in 1973, emerged in a series of parliamentary answers to Tony Banks MP. Defence Minister Lord Trefgarne has written to MPs that the Arrangement 'permits the US to establish, operate and maintain lines of communication and ancillary facilities in the UK for use under emergency conditions'.

It is officially described as an 'arrangement', not 'agreement', because otherwise it would have to be an international treaty, and registered (publicly) with the United Nations. Our original report erroneously gave the date the agreement was signed as 1983, not 1973. But agreement on new planning requirements for USUKLOC was reached in 1983, and a Joint Logistic Plan was then agreed.

Trefgarne admitted that 'as part of the Arrangement, the UK has agreed to ensure that requests for transport, medical and other facilities would be considered'. In fact, such 'consideration' has gone as far as

preparing at least 37 detailed joint plans. Questioned about conscript British civilian labour, for example, Employment Minister Kenneth Clarke said that the UK would 'try to ensure that their requirements for civilian manpower support are met. [But] detailed planning in support of the Arrangement is classified'.

Rear-Admiral Eugene Carroll, former Joint Director of Military Operations for the US European Command, told the *NS* last year that highly specific 'quotas' of impressed British labour were required in the plans. Unemployed people as well as skilled workers would be directed



British dole queues will provide conscript labour for the US military in war, according to Rear-Admiral Carroll, formerly of US European Command

into 'what is laughingly called more constructive efforts'.

Junior health minister Ray Whitney told Banks that 'contingency plans for ... NHS resources' did cover 'NATO military casualties'. Such plans would be 'incorporated in those for the NHS as a whole in time of crisis or war'.

The plans in fact provide for about 30 large general hospitals to be emptied of NHS patients and turned over to exclusive US use, according to civil service sources. But the identity of the hospitals to be commandeered has been kept secret from health authorities, who are nevertheless required to make civil defence war plans involving the use

Secrets Act for animals

GREATER SECRECY will surround information about animal experiments than now protects human medical tests, if a little-noticed clause in the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill is passed as it stands.

The Bill is now being considered by a House of Commons committee, and is likely to become law this summer. If the secrecy clause is unaltered, anyone leaking private information about the circumstances in which private experiments are conducted on animals would be subject to the same criminal penalties as an official who revealed secret government military plans and was prosecuted under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

The government currently publishes brief annual statistics about the numbers of animals used in laboratories, differentiated by species, techniques employed, and general type of institution. But information on the conditions in which these tests are carried out is not published. Yet this is the aspect which persistently attracts critical public concern, and to which animal rights activists wish to draw attention.

Clause 24 of the Animals Bill specifies that anyone who discloses 'any information' which they have

'reasonable grounds for believing to have been given in confidence' can face a fine or up to two years imprisonment. This would be in addition to losing their job for committing a breach of confidence.

But a doctor, nurse of hospital clerical worker who hands out confidential personal information, even against a human patient's express wishes, faces no criminal sanctions. Only special psychiatric hospitals like Rampton and Broadmoor are covered by the Official Secrets Act.

The special animal secrecy clause will affect non-civil-servants who are appointed to a proposed new statutory advisory committee, the Animal Procedures Committee, and to members of the Animal Procedures Inspectorate. These inspectors would issue licences to carry out 'regulated procedures' on vertebrate animals.

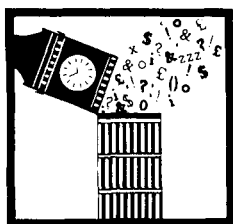
Animal welfare activists believe the secrecy of Clause 24 is intended to conceal much more information than merely the names and addresses of the animal experimenters and their laboratories — who are personally at risk from some activists. It extends to cover information of legitimate public concern about the treatment of animals. They claim, with some justice, that the bill — which has been presented as a humane reform of the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act — is in fact only 'intended to protect animal experimenters, not animals'. ●

Authority. The US Army has already provoked a storm in the area, when in September last year it acquired the former RAF hospital at Chessington.

Other government ministers have admitted that their departments have also made joint war plans with the US. Energy Secretary Peter Walker said that plans for the US to obtain the services of workers in the energy supply and distribution industries 'have been laid under [the] Arrangement'.

Transport Secretary Nicholas Ridley acknowledged that similar plans exist for civil aviation, port and shipping and other transport workers. The government had also 'agreed to consider requests' for other 'civil aviation facilities, including airports and aircraft' to be given to the US. Agriculture Minister Peggy Fenner gave a similar answer in respect of food and farming resources.

The government's responses at first appear to contradict our claim last year that the USUKLOC agreement gives 'priority to American military requirements'. Ministers claim that there is a 'proviso that the UK government would always have priority in using national resources'. But what they mean is that the British military would have priority over the US military in the use of British resources — with civilian needs coming not second, but third. ●



Labour versus the SDP: five years of tribal war

FIVE YEARS ON, many on the Left still find it easier to say nice things about the Conservatives than about the Social Democrats. The 'treachery' of the Gang of Four is too recent — and the wounds inflicted by their departure too deep — for reconciliation to be easy.

Hatred is a durable political commodity. America's Deep South remained 'Democratic' for a century, reliving a Civil War in which the President who defeated them was a Republican. Today in Ireland, the tribal divide between Fine Gael and Fianna Fail flows directly from the arguments within the IRA more than 60 years ago about whether, and on what precise terms, to settle with the British.

The potency of tribal politics is often underestimated. Conventionally we define and distinguish parties according to their ideology, or class interest, or policies, or leadership, or some combination of these factors. The parties themselves seek to reinforce this view: projecting their leaders, selling their policies, appealing to what they think are the views and interests of their potential supporters.

The last thing any party would willingly admit to is that it is a tribe. Around 1.5 million people belong to a political party; perhaps one quarter go to party meetings. This means that 96 per cent of the electorate belong to none of the party tribes and 99 per cent keep clear of their internal rituals.

It follows that elections involve a certain necessary deceit: parties wear a mask over their tribal features and pretend that they are the faithful agents of the popular will. Indeed, the durability of the Conservative Party owes much to the quality of its mask. It presents itself as the least tribal of the major parties. It is no accident that 'One Nation' is a Tory slogan: it is the obverse of 'A tribe? Us? No, you're thinking of the other parties. We're not political like they are. You're safe with us'. Nor is it any accident that 'One Nation' has been used within the Tory tribe as a drumbeat for attacking Mrs Thatcher. Her views are too clear, her ideology too blatant. She is altogether too political — that is too blatantly tribal.

Our main concern here, however, is with the non-Conservative tribes. Labour and the Liberals have rubbed along fairly well over the years. The Labour lot, with their red face paint, were nurtured in their early years by the Liberals. From time to time they have made common cause against the Conservative enemy across the river, such as during the Lib-Lab pact in the mid-1970s. Skirmishes between Labour and the Liberals did start to take place in some of the more dilapidated clearings — like Bermondsey and Liverpool — but on the whole they have

been happy to leave each other to fight the Tories on the ground that suits each best.

Then came the Great Labour Split. The Gang of Four went off and started their own tribe, the SDP. They wiped the red paint off their face, covered themselves in red, white and blue stripes instead and started throwing spears at their former comrades in arms.

This angered the Labour tribe greatly. They understood, even respected, the Conservative foe. The two sides fought according to agreed rules — something called 'first-past-the-post', which political anthropologists from other lands found hard to understand.

PETER KELLNER

The new tribe threatened Labour on three counts. The comrades with red paint lost some of their best warriors. The deserters formed an Alliance with the Liberals and made the orange folk more hostile to Labour. And they repudiated the rules of the Labour-Conservative war. (The Liberals had been trying to do this for years, but on their own they were too small and nobody took much notice of their ideas about how the wars should be fought.)

THE METAPHOR could be extended almost indefinitely. The essential point remains that the mutual hostility between Labour and the SDP remains mainly tribal.

Consider the stated political content of the Gang of Four's decision to form their own party. They said that the Labour Party was undemocratic; that it was dominated by 'extremists'; that Labour's paymasters, the trade unions, supported the party without the proper approval of their members; that Labour refused to acknowledge the need to restrain incomes during economic recovery; that it wanted Britain out of the Common Market; that it was hell-bent on nationalising everything it could; that it had a dangerous defence policy.

The Gang of Four said they left Labour because on issues like these they saw no hope of the party becoming 'more sensible'. Yet observe what has happened even without Roy Jenkins's authority, Shirley Williams's charm, David Owen's machismo and Bill Rodgers's organisational skills.

Labour is becoming steadily more democratic (witness the number of party members who had a formal say in Neil Kinnock's leadership election). The 'extremists' have been marginalised and the process of expelling members of Militant is under way. Trade union members have voted overwhelmingly to maintain their

political funds. Roy Hattersley hardly ever stops talking about the need for incomes restraint when Labour returns to power. Re-nationalisation has been postponed indefinitely. Withdrawal from the Common Market is a dead issue.

Defence still provides a meaty bone of contention, but a score of six out of seven differences lessened or removed is not bad going. In any case, the Liberals and the SDP have yet to settle their *own* disputes here.

There remains one other issue that divides Labour and the SDP: proportional representation. This was not even mentioned as a cause in the original Limehouse defections, but now seems to matter a lot. 'Without constitutional reform, we will remain divided and will continue our relative economic decline', writes David Owen in his new book, published this week.*

The arguments for and against PR have been discussed in this column in the past and will no doubt be discussed again. My point here is that the SDP's enthusiasm for it — and Labour's opposition to it — are *caused by*, and not *causes of*, the two parties' tribal animosity. Labour's tribe wants rules of war that serve its interest: the SDP likewise. There is nothing wrong with that, nor anything wrong for both sides to pretend that their policy is for the good of the country rather than the good of the tribe.

(By the by, a recent unpublished finding by Gallup deserves an airing. When it asks its standard PR question: 'Would you be in favour of a system where the number of seats a party won in the House of Commons was proportional to the number of votes it won nationally?' — a large majority say 'yes'. The figures for last November were: yes 59 per cent, no 20 per cent, don't know 21 per cent. But a few weeks later Gallup asked a different, more even-handed question: 'Some people say that we should change the voting system to allow smaller political parties to get a fairer share of MPs. Others say that we should keep the voting system as it is to produce effective government. Which view comes closest to your own?' This time 45 per cent said 'change the voting system', while 47 per cent said 'keep it as it is'. This reinforces my view that a referendum on the issue may not go Dr Owen's way.)

This week, the fifth birthday of the SDP, marks an event of tribal more than ideological significance. The SDP is celebrating the event. So are some on the Left — 'good riddance to the traitors'. But the only tribe that can take any real comfort is the collection of warriors with blue face-paint: the Conservative Party. As long as their opponents remain divided, they stand some chance of winning the major wars. ☐

*A United Kingdom, Penguin, £2.95

RESPONSIBILITY BETRAYED

NEIL KINNOCK on the nonsense the Prime Minister is making of the real-world economics of the motor industry. He argues that it's in Britain's interest to back BL

IN PUBLIC the government presents a pragmatic case for the dismemberment of BL: the company is too expensive for the taxpayer to keep in business, and anyhow it's too small to survive in the fiercely competitive world of the modern motor industry. In private the government exercises its instinctive prejudice against publicly owned BL, as any objective consideration of the history, present condition, and potential of the company demonstrates.

Since BL was rescued by the Labour government in 1974 £2.2 billion of public money has been invested in the company, roughly £120 for every family in the land. Now all the divisions of the company have improved their performance dramatically, with Austin Rover and Land Rover both firmly back into profit, and there has been no demand on the Treasury for the past two years.

Have we got our money's worth? We have certainly done better than if the company had been closed. The unemployment pay and lost taxes would have cost us well over £1 billion every year, more than £600 per family by now. Moreover, BL has earned us a net balance on foreign trade of roughly £800 million a year.

As Table 1 shows, in 1979 Ford contributed £60 million to our foreign earnings, while GM managed to lose £100 million. In 1984, however, Ford and GM between them were losing us £1,100 million. Indeed, the entire deterioration in our balance of trade in cars over this period is due to the activities of Ford and GM, and not to more imports from European or Japanese producers.

The reason for the deficits incurred by Ford and GM is clear from Table 2. Since 1973 both companies have taken to importing a significant proportion of components and vehicles from their plants in Europe.

The behaviour of Ford and GM is obviously based on straightforward commercial interest, not on malice. Management will run those companies in what they consider to be the best interests of the company, and if that obligation does not accord with the best interests of the UK economy the results are a foregone conclusion. It is in any case understandable, if entirely regrettable, if the high interest rate, high exchange rate, deflationary policies of Mrs Thatcher's government persuade companies to produce outside the UK.

Governments, however, have a quite different obligation. Any UK government that knows its duty must give primacy to the

interests of the UK economy. The present government does the opposite. In terms of likely financial, technological, trade and employment cost to the economy and hence to the British taxpayer, the sale of BL (in whole or in part) is not simply economically unwise, it is a downright betrayal of responsibility.

ONE OF THE MYSTERIES of the BL affair is that while the government wants to get rid of our company, so many hard headed, commercially minded companies want to buy it. What they are after is clearly both BL's market share and, most of all, BL's new found technological lead.

The Prime Minister regularly cites the relatively small size of BL (in particular Austin Rover's 4 per cent share of the European car market) as the key indicator of the failure of the public sector company for which she has such

contempt. So the bus and truck divisions, and Land Rover, must be sold off to bigger companies, leaving a yet smaller, and as far as the Prime Minister is concerned, yet more vulnerable BL to fend for itself until such time as its performance has deteriorated sufficiently to defuse any fuss.

It is crucial to the future of the motor industry in this country that it be recognised that, in many respects, the Prime Minister is hopelessly out of date. Modern, computer controlled, 'just-in-time' production lines, and the evident distaste of the car-buying public for uniformity has brought the era of the huge production run and the 'world car' to an end. On a recent visit I saw how, despite its relatively small size, BL has invested heavily in modern robotics, and why, according to *Engineer* magazine, it is now the most efficient car producer in Europe.



Camera Press

Where size does matter is in marketing, finance, and research and development. Successful marketing requires an extensive network of dealers and service centres and, of course, a first-rate product to sell. For many years, as far as European truck sales were concerned, BL had neither. Now the truck division has an acknowledged technological lead and an excellent product. Instead of seeking joint marketing arrangements, and exploring the implications of information technology for marketing and servicing, the government is determined to sell off the truck division to GM, a company that has already failed to produce a range of trucks that is competitive in Europe and which also has a totally inadequate European marketing system!

The financial and R&D implications of scale are closely related. The motor industry is no longer about 'medium-tech' metal bashing. It's a high-tech industry, second only to aerospace in the large scale application of new materials and new production methods. Innovation on this scale requires the commitment of enormous amounts of money for considerable periods of time, both for pure research (the outcome of which is uncertain) and for applying science to production.

The British financial system has shown itself to be singularly incompetent in the provision of the requisite funds. If companies are too small, or insufficiently profitable, to generate the money themselves to design a new wing, or develop a ceramic engine, or devise a new robot production line, they have only the government to turn to. That is how government has, by the default of the financial system, acquired the jobs of financing innovation and restructuring inefficient companies.

In the case of BL this has been a remarkable success. BL achieved excellent and proven production improvements and secured innovative solutions to the problem of expensive R&D. The BL collaboration with Honda spreads R&D costs and contributes to the development of an effective marketing organisation. Meanwhile the Computer Aided Design and Manufacture (CAD/CAM) research programme developed jointly with Warwick University has brought some of the most sophisticated applications of information technology to mass manufacturing anywhere in the world.

THE LESSONS to be learnt from the experiences of BL are obvious. First, in evaluating the cost to the nation of maintaining production it is necessary to make an assessment that is more in accord with the true cost to the economy rather than narrow short-term accounting criteria. Of course commercial companies should be profitable in the long run. But short-term profits and losses can be very misleading guides to the best interests of the company and the nation.

Second, the need for a long-term view is particularly important in an industry like vehicle manufacture whose technological base is changing so rapidly that it sweeps much conventional commercial wisdom aside.

Third, new technology requires both large sums of long-term money, and a mechanism whereby companies which are being badly run

or have fallen on hard times can be restructured financially, managerially and technologically. In Britain this restructuring is either done by the market (which has a distinctly short-run view) or, in a rather ad hoc manner, by the government.

The contrast between BL and the Japanese car makers Mazda recently drawn by Will Hutton (the *Listener* 13 February) is instructive. In 1974 BL's debts equalled its equity and would have been forced into bankruptcy if the Labour government had not undertaken a rescue. At the same time Mazda's debts were four times bigger than its equity, its technology was out of date, and its production was only two thirds that of BL. It was not abandoned by its bankers. Instead they undertook the successful refinancing and restructuring of the company. A new financial institution which will take a systematic long-term view, and show understanding and commitment to manufacturing industry, is a

necessity if Britain is going to keep any place among the industrial economies.

Fourth, the greatest challenge facing the motor industry, indeed all British industry, is the development and application of new materials and techniques. The enormous cost of these processes requires that research proceed on a more collaborative basis, with the wider encouragement of the fast developing 'research clubs', in which firms and government collaborate in pure and applied research (as recommended in the *Report of the Collyear Committee*, HMSO, 1985). It is vital for the future of Britain that new ideas spread rapidly, in a coherent and co-ordinated manner, both within and between industries.

ALL THESE lessons point to the necessity of keeping BL together as an integrated company. It is already a company of which its owners, we the taxpayers, can be proud. Not only has it been turned around financially, but in the most difficult economic environment imaginable it has taken the initiative in developing the research and production techniques of the future.

Of course, the company isn't perfect. But it can be the productive and profitable core of the British motor industry, and provide a focus for automotive development both within the company and for the many excellent small engineering companies in Britain which today apply their skills to designing the vehicles of the future that are being produced abroad. We must provide a market for those skills in Britain. We won't do that by breaking up and selling off our only major vehicle producer. If BL is to play this central role, it now deserves the continuity and quality of resources, the consistent backing, and the imagination and initiative that it has obtained and displayed within the public sector.

Seven years of Mrs Thatcher's policies have laid waste to many parts of Britain's manufacturing. Now, on top of all that, she sells wants to dismember BL. If she succeeds, she will be selling off a major part of what's left of our industrial future. □

Table 1: UK balance of trade in motor cars

	1979	1984
	£m	£m
BL (including Jaguar)	+800	+800
Ford	+60	-500
GM	-100	-600
Overall trade balance	-1765	-2665

Source: D. T. Jones, *SPRU*, unpublished data

Table 2: UK content of cars sold in the UK

	1973	1984
	%	%
BL (including Jaguar)	100	92
Ford	88	49
GM	89	22

Source: D. T. Jones, *The Import Threat to the UK Car Industry*, *SPRU* 1985

Michael Foot Loyalists and Loners

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DON'T DO IT FERGIE!



And this is the House that Lilibet built. In 1986 when only two hereditary royal dukedoms are left, Gloucester and Kent (the dukedoms of her husband and eldest son being special cases), she creates a third, York, for her son Andrew. In 1990 she creates a fourth, Sussex, for her son Edward. In 2010 (we will suppose him to have become king) Charles III makes her grandson Harry duke of Mey. In 2020 he makes Harry's younger brother (Queen Diana's third son) duke of Edinburgh. In 2040 William V (we will suppose him now king at 58) makes his own two younger sons dukes respectively of Clarence and Dorset. In 2080 Charles IV makes his two younger sons dukes respectively of Balmoral and Avon. They are Elizabeth II's great-great-grandsons. We are all dead, but many babes-in-arms of 1986 are not. There are 10 hereditary royal dukedoms and under the eyes of US Senators the people of London remove the regime and file through Kensington Palace marvelling at the closets-full of couture clothes

Her own £5 notes may remind the Queen why she'd be ill-advised to make Andrew Duke of York, warns ANDREW LUMSDEN Esq

WHILE I'VE NO DOUBT my colleague Peter Kellner's column is feverishly studied every week by the Queen in her longing to be rid of Tuesday audiences with Margaret Thatcher, the Queen Mother probably doesn't touch us with a shooting-stick in the ordinary way. One of her brothers-in-law once expressed a left-wing sentiment during a period of mass unemployment and look where it got him. A genial old right-winger she, surrounded by the sort of 'bachelors disinclined for marriage' (Penelope Mortimer in *Queen Elizabeth: A Life of the Queen Mother*) who in my experience are to the right of Norman Podhoretz; or Genghis Khan.

But we're all given to understand that in the privacy of their own homes the royals seat not the Queen but the Queen Mum at the head of the table, her glass of Scotch at hand, on the

grounds that she's the senior stateswoman. So we address ourselves to her, *Statesman* to stateswoman. Even as you read this a footman will be carrying a copy up from the Clarence House laundry, freshly-ironed for HM the QM's perusal. Here we are on page 12: 'Dissuade, if you can, your elder daughter from reviving for her younger son, now that he's about to get married, the title Duke of York, held by your own late husband before fate's trampoline bounced him into becoming George VI. Yours — *Don't Do It Fergie!* — the NS'.

Sauce! Well, yes. But look at what Enoch Powell had to say in *The Times* 'as Britain celebrates Prince Andrew's engagement'. The business of the British Royal Family, wrote Powell, 'is to understand the British' (20 March). The main consultant on the British

employed by that earlier matriarch Victoria, when she was young, the Duke of Wellington, said of George III's vast brood that they were 'the damndest millstone about the neck of any government that can be imagined'. The brood of that dutiful and pleasant gentlewoman Elizabeth II and her immediate connections is now distending at such a rate that she is threatening the country with a brand-new and brazen aristocracy: a *nouveau ancien regime*.

A 'hypocrisy', we might neologise, telescoping 'hyper' and 'aristocracy': lordlings and ladylings, dukes and duchesses, princes and princesses, aggregated by their royal derivation and most particularly by media singling-out (hyperbole) into a new 20th/21st century social class poised *above* the upper-class though comfortably moving within it. Pre-Revolutionary Russia had just such a colossal class-above-the-upper-class, the Grand Dukes. So very likely does every monarchy before the fall. And that opens out the train of thought, the speculation, whether the insensate adulation/fantasia of 'the royals' by press and broadcasting may not itself be symptomatic of some approaching end — decades off maybe, but approaching. There is such an air of *trying* to believe, ikon-worship before the iconoclasm.

CONFINING myself still to comment from the right, or centre-right, there was James Fenton on the same day this month as Enoch Powell and in the same paper referring to 'that most wasteful form of social organisation, the monarchy' (while reviewing Germaine Greer's *Shakespeare*). It does have its economic eccentricities: who drawing up a Constitution today would allot £100,000 a year or more each to a dozen or so men and women to 'present an image of normality' (phrase from the *Times* editorial)? It's so odd it's almost interesting: what about a Shadow Civil List, a dozen or so characters on £100,000 a year for life to present alternative images of normality? A Black Princess Anne, a single-parent Diana, fully as much colonels-of-the-regiment and patrons of this and that as the white Anne and the nuclear Diana? HRH Diane Abbott?

Seriously though (I must recall this morning's Clarence House readership) it isn't the infinitesimal fractions of the wages of myself or anyone else in work that coagulate in the royal bank accounts which should worry the QM at breakfast in these happy days of Prince Andrew's engagement. It's the proposal to make a duke of him. 'Reverence [for a royal family] could not doubtless continue among a cultivated population' wrote Walter Bagehot crushingly under Victoria, 'but then among a cultivated population . . . it would not be required'. Tolerant amusement, which is probably the 1980s for 'reverence', would collapse if London turns into Riyadh, awash with royalty. Princess Michael-on-the-Make is the cuckoo of that approaching spring.

I calculate that given the modern quality of pre-natal and birth care available to royals and the health provision for the adults, a precedent-sustaining decision to convert Prince Andrew out of a rank that dies with him into a hereditary duke could lead to there being five hereditary royal dukedoms by about the end of QEII's reign, and ten a century from

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today. 'Courtesy' earldoms could quintuple over the next century. The numbers of 'courtesy' lords and ladies (as in Lady Sarah Armstrong-Jones) could rocket from 15 today to around 100. Applying to these figures the multiplier by which in-laws, best friends, and pre- and extra-marital lovers get blazoned abroad and you achieve the Versailles/St Petersburg nymphs and shepherds effect, wastrels who can't, like the decayed 'old' aristocracy (Lord Blandford aside), lurk unobserved, but must increasingly bore and annoy those professional classes who make revolutions, if only from fear of the 'mob' (ie 'inner cities').

81 per cent of those interviewed by NOP in the 23 March *Mail on Sunday* poll of the Brits think there'll still be a monarchy 50 years from now, 89 per cent oppose its abolition. My tolerant fellow countrypersons didn't know, when they were buttonholed by the NOP researchers, that if the Queen doesn't break precedent now and stop making dukes of the monarchy's surplus sons, who in the old days used obligingly to die, get bumped off, or leave no legitimate 'issue', there could be dukes of Kent, Gloucester, York, Sussex and Mey 50 years from now, with the sovereign still fountaining more of them. (I invent 'Mey' on the same principle as 'Windsor', the castle of Mey being a favourite home of the QM's.) If £5 notes could speak, the image of the Iron Duke would be muttering 'damned millstones'.

THE ONE WITH the gumption as well as the gumboots, the one who has done her bit against a hypocrisy, is Mrs Mark Phillips, whose kids have no handles, plainly at her own wish: *Phillips Egalité*. The wise thing now (I do believe I hear the Queen Mum yelling to the footmen to get her daughter on the line) is to announce before Fergie marries her Andrew with the obligatory State Fun and Games that the engaged couple have declined with affectionate thanks the Queen's offer to make them Duke and Duchess of York. They choose to be known as Prince and Princess Andrew and the babies ('it would be fun to have quite a few' — Fergie, 19 March) will be untitled. No new 'strawberry leaf' coronets, lordlings and ladylings, no further impetus towards the creation of the New Riyadh.

I can't think why I bother. As a republican (the law-courts for a start should be in the name of the people) I ought instead to be inciting the Queen to ride rough-shod over her daughter and forcibly make a Grand Duke Peter and a Grand Duchess Zara out of her little brutes. But I don't mind the royals as persons: I don't have Ekaterinburg-massacre longings. The monarchy is democratically desired for now, however insidiously corrupting I may think it. The royals, who can so well afford it, will go on having babies. (I have a new niece myself, 11½ month old Arabella, who is just starting to walk, so I do know what people mean with the oohing-and-aahing.) I'd just like a bit of damage-limitation.

And that, as I take it, means the Queen halting now, through the chance opportunity of my namesake's approaching wedding, the threatened boom in dukeships, earlships, and lord and ladyships. Consider, Mum: what a smack in the eye for Mrs T, with her seeming visions of an earldom to leave to Mark. □

CRISIS IN MENTAL HEALTH

A New Statesman 3-parter — part 2

End 1986 will see the first mental hospital closure as part of government policy aimed at 'care in the community'. There has been plenty of opposition to this policy on the Left but little serious attempt to develop a radical alternative. DAVID BERRY, in the second of three articles sketching out what such an alternative might be, reports on the British Network for Alternatives to Psychiatry.

THE LAST THIRTY YEARS, psychiatrists say, have seen a revolution in the treatment of severe mental illness in Britain. Conditions like the schizophrenias, manic-depressive disorder and severe depression, once thought incurable, can now be treated successfully by psychotropic drugs like the 'major tranquillisers', lithium and the tricyclic anti-depressants and by electro-convulsive treatment (ECT).

These treatments, the conventional psychiatric wisdom goes, have led to a considerable improvement in the lives of the one family in five who are affected by mental illness in Britain, the one man in nine and the one woman in five who need psychiatric help at some point in their lifetime. They have provided a rationale for the run-down and eventual closure of many of Britain's mental hospitals, for they can be given just as effectively in a day hospital or outpatient clinic, and they can allow patients once condemned to spend their lives in an institution to live in the 'community'. Who could possibly object to the caring use of these treatments?

One group which does object is the British Network for Alternatives to Psychiatry which, in the last year, has become a new focal point for left-wing thinking on mental health. On Sunday (23 March) the Network met in London to review two of their latest campaigns: an attempt to ban the use of ECT in Britain and a working group to challenge the dominance of 'major tranquilliser' drugs.

The success in the last few years of the consumer-led campaign against the blanket use of minor tranquillisers for the treatment of anxiety has led to a new questioning of the benefits of drugs in mental health-care. Just as there are now several 'minor tranquilliser' withdrawal groups around the country, so too ex-psychiatric patients are planning to set up similar groups for major tranquilliser users. And as the consumer interest in the minor drugs brought to the surface professional doubts about their use for anxiety, so too some mental health professionals are starting to wonder what kind of revolution ECT and the major drugs have brought about in the treatment of serious mental illness.

In short, there is now a political constituency for the British Network's views. What are their arguments?

The Network's first objection to ECT and the major drugs is that these treatments have

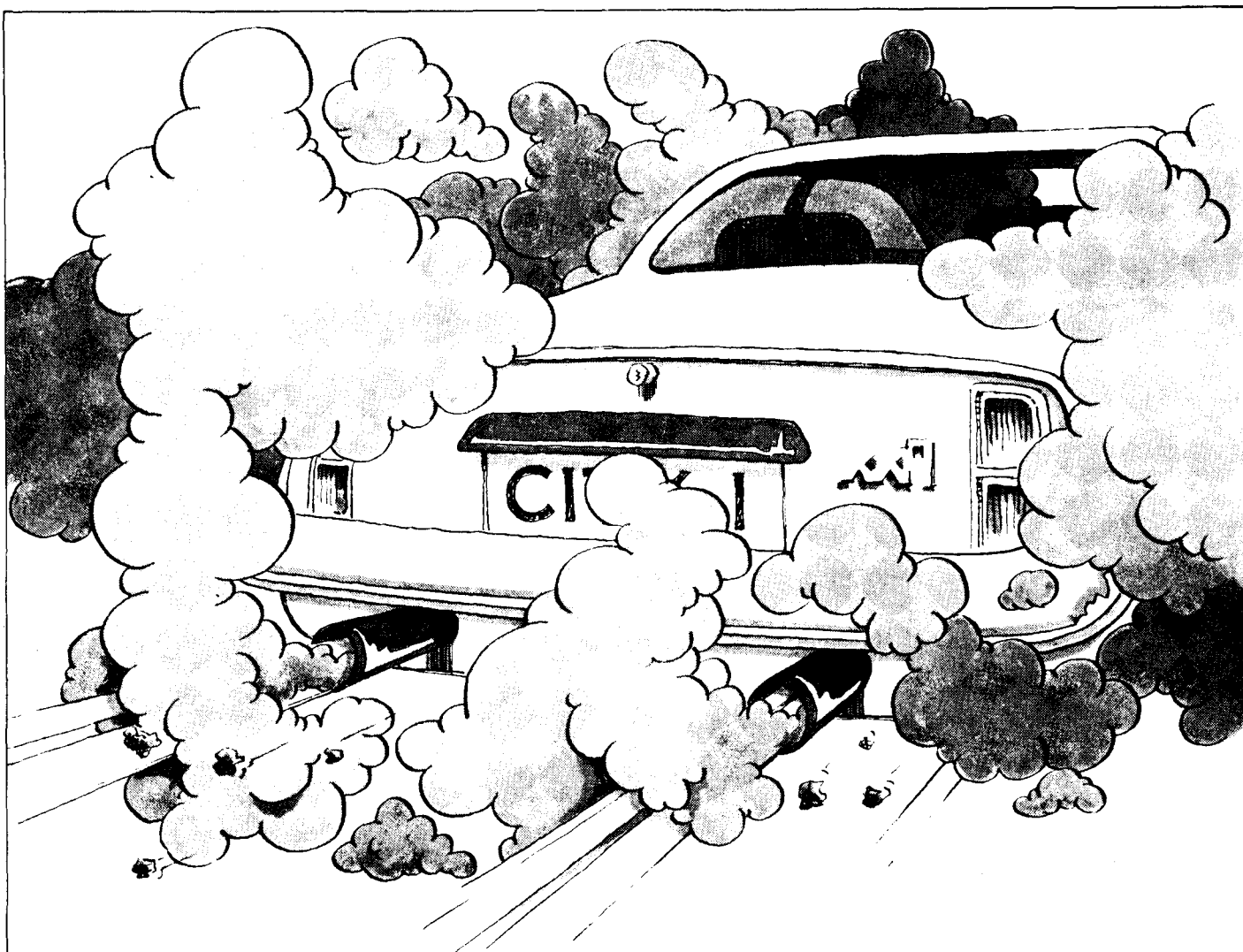
serious side-effects which have not been taken seriously by conventional psychiatry. Network members claim, for example, that ECT produces brain damage and long-term memory loss; the major tranquillisers, the distressing and irreversible involuntary muscle movement disorder, Tardive Dyskinesia, in up to 40 per cent of users. Their second objection is that these treatments do not cure mental distress but simply remove the symptoms and are sometimes not very good at that. It is by no means clear, Network members say, that the major tranquillisers are much better at preventing a psychotic relapse than a developed social support system. And the price for taking lithium regularly is a continual greyness of mood, a psychological dependence on the drug and possible long-standing damage to the kidneys and other vital organs.

These objections, in turn, are disputed by conventional psychiatrists. They say that the side-effects of the drugs can be minimised and are outweighed by the possible harmful effects of not treating the illness. The side-effects of ECT, especially in its new unilateral form, are minimal and short-lived. The majority of clinical trials show that ECT and the major drugs are the 'treatments of choice' for serious mental illness.

It isn't possible here to go into the long and detailed controversy about clinical trials in psychiatry, what exactly they measure and with that they have been compared. But in any case, according to Network members, it matters little. For their most important objection to the use of ECT and the major drugs is the context in which they are used. Psychiatrists sympathetic to the Network say these treatments are used at the first sign of mental distress rather than as a helpful addition to encouraging patients to understand what they are going through and providing a sheltered and supportive environment. The treatments have led to an all-powerful doctor, a five minute diagnosis and a powerless 'ill' patient. ECT in particular, but also the major drugs, are used to manage patients and to control unruly behaviour.

How much, these psychiatrists ask, has the 'revolution in mental health-care' brought about by ECT and the major drugs been motivated by the desire amongst conventional psychiatry to gain status and acceptance in general medicine? And how much has it led to alternatives to the major treatment like the psychotherapies, the therapeutic community approach, family work which help patients help themselves, not being tried and adapted for the seriously mentally ill in Britain? □

The British Network for Alternatives to Psychiatry can be contacted c/o 158 Rivermead Court, London SW6. Next: Psychotherapy in the NHS



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A COURT PROCEDURE WHICH MUST CHANGE

Rape survivors face an unacceptable judicial ordeal from 'old-style' committal hearings, say OXFORD RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

SOMETIMES THE DRUDGERY of activism is surprised by an unexpected act of official support. For this Rape Crisis Centre, the gift in question is the recent survey by the Home Office Research and Planning (HORPU) Unit into how well committal proceedings in magistrates' courts work as a 'filtering out' stage in the criminal process!

The Unit concluded that even 'old style' committals — which review in detail the prosecution evidence against the accused before the case goes to Crown Court — don't necessarily prevent weak cases getting this far; and they roughly double the time taken for a case to pass through the courts. So perhaps the Home Office will act on the recommendations of the 1981 Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, and press to replace all committal proceedings with a different form of review.

Meanwhile, back at the local magistrates' courts, 'old style' committals continue. They are more contentious than the Home Office survey suggests. The bulk of a Rape Crisis Centre's work deals with the long-term effects of assaults which, in most cases, were never reported. We see few Crown Court rape trials; but we are familiar with the effects on women who have reported a rape to the police, identified their assailant, waited months to come to court — only to discover that magistrates have declined to commit an apparently strong case for trial.

Committals originated in the last century as a safeguard against wrongful trial on serious charges. Witnesses for the prosecution would give evidence and be cross-examined by the defence, whose client reserved his or her right to silence. They remain an opportunity for the defence to challenge the adequacy of the prosecution case. The 1967 Criminal Justice Act speeded up the committal process by allowing 'quick' committals, and most cases are dispatched in a brisk flurry of official documents. But 'old style' committals (Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, section 6 (1)) were used in about 7 per cent of the HORPU sample of 5553 committals in England and Wales during January 1981.

What interests us is that only when the accused is unrepresented are 'old style' committals automatic. Mostly they are requested, either by the prosecution (about a quarter of the sample) or by the defence (roughly two thirds). Why should they do anything so expensive? Looking through the case law which in the past has forced appeal decisions on the purpose and conduct of 'old style' committals, it is striking that the offences concerned — criminal libel, in *R. v Wells*

Stipendiary Magistrate, ex parte Deakin (1979), and sexual offences, in *R. v Epping and Harlow Justices, ex parte Massaro* (1972), imply assumptions about the character and reliability of the chief prosecution witness. No smoke without fire . . .

An 'old style' committal for rape, especially where the likely defence will be that the victim consented, illustrates in perfect miniature the collision of two obsessions of British justice. Sir Matthew Hale instructed us in 1736 never to forget that rape is as hard to prove as it is to defend. Hence the presumption of the accused's innocence is peculiarly enhanced by attitudes which suspect the inherent truthfulness of a woman's testimony of rape. Societal attitudes which regard as improbable a woman's refusal to consent to intercourse reinforce in court the sense of guilt and responsibility which a rape survivor will already feel as part of the complex crisis reaction known medically as Rape Trauma Syndrome.

THE 1976 SEXUAL OFFENCES (Amendment) Act defends rape survivors against harmful publicity and offensive questioning in all courts. But the woman

'It is really performance, not truth, which is at stake'

called to give evidence in an 'old style' committal is unlikely to have (since etiquette forbids all but the briefest contact between prosecuting officers and witnesses) much idea of what she is in for. Her evidence will be recorded, then transcribed as an exhibit for the Crown Court trial. There, the prosecution may assist her through her statement; but for the committal deposition to make any narrative sense, she must address the bench unaided. She must remember to reproduce exactly her original statement to the police (a copy of which she is entitled, but not likely, to have), as the defence will use any discrepancy to strengthen their case at trial.

By the time she is cross-examined, she may have realised that the only reason for her presence is to dismantle her, without the accused, in his turn, being put to similar account. If she is under seventeen, and well versed in the law, she may reflect that to give

evidence twice is something young offenders are now protected against. But while she's there, the justices will judge her, not only by how far the defence can suggest her unreliability, but by her stamina under cross-examination. Nerves in Crown Court may or may not result in a mistaken acquittal; at committal, they mean no trial. It is really performance, not truth, which is at stake.

What a rape survivor is least likely to know is that she may never have had to be there in the first place. *Massaro* established that, since committals were not trials, the prosecution had no obligation to present even an important witness if it could otherwise demonstrate a prima facie case for trial; and that no breach of natural justice thereby ensued to the accused. The very requirement for corroborative evidence independent of a rape survivor's testimony — and the sophisticated forensic techniques which the police have been forced to develop in response — should, in theory, make it almost unnecessary for rape survivors to attend committals.

MAYBE WITHHOLDING rape survivors from committal hearings would only add one more emergency proposal to those which the law has introduced to cope with its own bias around rape. And there is now growing support for the representation of rape victims in court. At present this is impossible as the rape victim appears as the witness and witnesses are not technically parties. They could be parties if they were to bring more private prosecutions for rape; when will this be a real option for most women? Also, last December, two women successfully claimed damages for long-term effects of sexual assault. But few rapists will recently themselves have been awarded handsome damages by the same judge for accident injuries.

Attitudes will have to change. The recent, and excellent, report on *Violence against Women* by the Women's National Commission (previous co-chair: M. Thatcher) describes current best practice in the respectful treatment of victims and recommends further improvements ranging from the simple — improving court facilities so that women do not routinely share waiting rooms with their rapists — to the radical — extending the law to recognise marital rape? It also accepts the important research of Ian Blair, a police officer not yet wholly believed by his own profession, who argues that women are no more likely to lie about rape than any other victim of any other violent crime (2 per cent, for the record). This is the biggest hurdle we have yet to clear. We shall see whether the Home Office, in the interests of streamlined justice, drops committals. Saving money carries more clout than campaigning. To ensure that serious crime reaches trial and that 'old style' committals do not act as a different, and quite unacceptable kind of filter, would be good enough reason to do it. □

1. 'The effectiveness of committal proceedings as a filter in the criminal justice system' is published by David Moxon (ed), *Managing Criminal Justice*, Home Office Research and Planning Unit, HMSO, 1985.
2. *Violence against Women* is published by the Women's National Commission (Cabinet Office, London SW1).
3. Ian Blair, *Investigating Rape: a new approach for police*, was published by Croom Helm in 1985.

DON'T BE distracted by the events of the newspaper world: the big media news is Maxwell and his new-found friends in European TV. Maxwell has long been dabbling in cable and satellite broadcasting, picking up the discarded bits from the failed cable TV investments of major companies like Thorn-EMI. His rival is again Rupert Murdoch, whose satellite Sky Channel creeps into a few British cabled homes, but blasts Scandinavia with re-runs of *Wagon Train* and music videos.

Maxwell sees himself as the European alternative to the American Murdoch (yes, it's the Westland scenario again). But Maxwell is equally known for his investment miscalculations, so few thought his quiet acquisition of space on the French direct broadcast satellite would lead anywhere. Everyone assumed that the shaky consortium of BBC and ITV companies talking about a British direct broadcast satellite would actually deliver the goods in the end. Well, they didn't (it seemed to cost too much), so suddenly Cap'n Bob was sitting on a valuable asset.

So valuable was the asset that he took fright. The investment in money and programme provision was awesomely vast: two Channels, one an English language TV service, supported entirely from commercials, beamed into every home in Britain, France and the Low Countries and even into Eastern Europe, received by a dish on the roof of a kind you can already rent from your local TV rental outlet.

Maxwell needed expertise and allies. Expertise he had handed to him when Bryan Cowgill, the ever-popular director of programmes at Thames TV, was forced to resign after pinching *Dallas* from the BBC and being told to give it back. But the supply of programmes, and the capital, were not to be found in Britain. So he's done a deal: the French satellite service, TDF 1, will be run by a consortium consisting of Mirror Group, the German company Tarusfilm, the French



Maxwell leaps for the skies

JOHN ELLIS

Fifth Channel, and the Italian Silvio Berlusconi. A truly European group... until you analyse it. For Berlusconi is a principal partner in the French Fifth Channel (along with Jerome Seydoux, an heir to the Schlumberger fortune), and controls Italian private TV. The deal, really, is that Berlusconi has gained control of the first English-language direct broadcast satellite in Europe, with Maxwell (and the German Leo Kirch) as window-dressing junior partners.

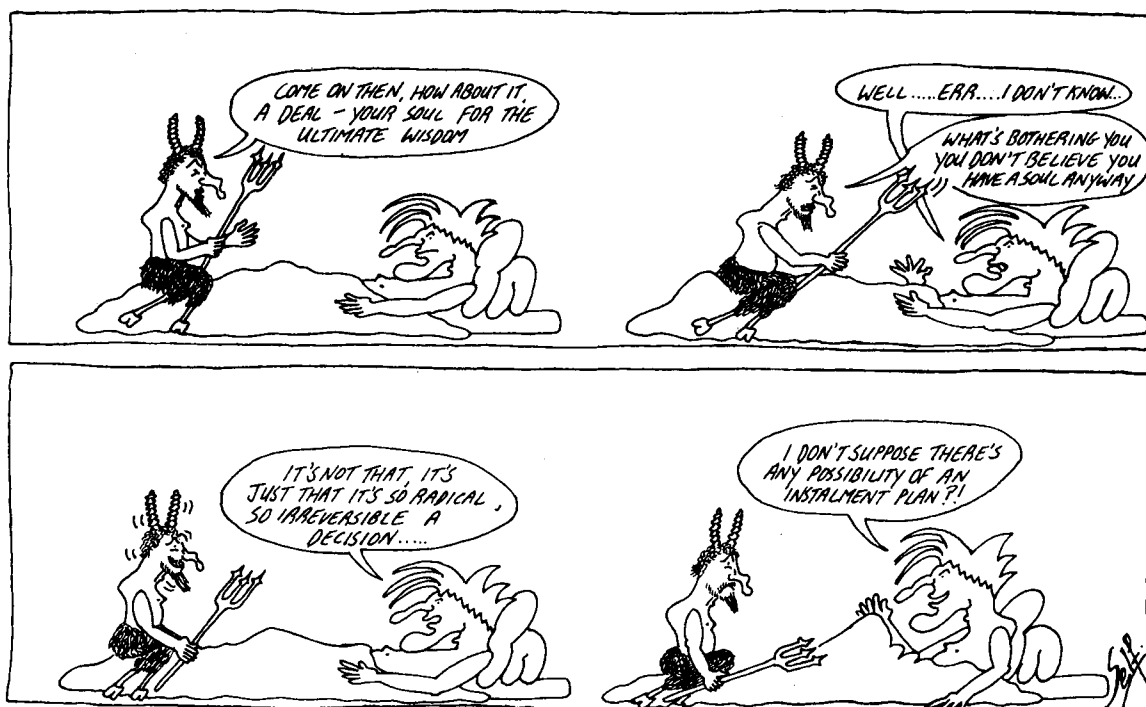
So what? Direct broadcast satellite is particularly important in Britain, where there is now very little cable, and there's never likely to be either. So satellite broadcast, via small cheap aerials mounted on the roof or garden, is the only viable method of transmission for transnational TV. Silvio Berlusconi is important because he (single-handedly) has exploited the derestriction of Italian TV to build himself a highly profitable monopoly. His participation in TDF 1 is therefore part of a strategy of building a 'new wave' private broadcasting empire across the world.

Britain provides him with the opening to the English language markets as Spain does to South America. Until Maxwell, Britain had eluded him. So who and what is Silvio Berlusconi? He began in property, building new housing projects outside Milan, with a cable TV infrastructure for which he then began to make programmes. When a sudden court ruling allowed anyone to start a TV station in Italy, so long as it was *local*, he moved in and built up a network of entertainment channels amid the plethora of diverse voices and styles that exploded. Ten years later, the diversity of local TV has been wiped out (some isolated pockets remain) by three light entertainment channels, all three controlled by Berlusconi's Fininvest.

Berlusconi programmes his channels with a mixture of variety shows, American imports, and, more recently, with the first hesitant offerings from feature film co-production. Recently, Berlusconi's close friend, Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, introduced him to a short dark Frenchman in need of a commercial channel of vaguely populist sympathies.

The result was that Mitterrand gave Channel 5 to Berlusconi and transport king Jerome Seydoux. Channel 5 has started out as the best of the three Italian channels, but (as with Eddie Shah) with most of the colour missing for technical reasons not unconnected with the unseemly haste with which the whole thing was set up.

Berlusconi is the real power of European private TV, and once he has used Britain as a test-bed, he'll try to beat the Americans on their home continent. He may well succeed; mainly because he has succeeded already in making Italian TV more like American TV than any other European nation's. He offers dynamism — and monopoly, with little regard for national cultures. And why should he? It's up to governments and people to reshape their broadcasting: Berlusconi can only succeed if the task is abdicated to him.



DIARY

Alison Hennegan

Cambridge

Moonlight streams down on Jacobean brickwork and the satisfying smell of earth after rain rises, cleanly pungent. And there on the grass in Second Court two sozzled members of the 1st XV lie motionless in Black Tie and close embrace. Nearby another drunken couple lurch over the cobbles, intermittently propping themselves, confusingly entwined, against a wall whilst one explains ardently to the other 'The thing is, you see, WE ARE THE BOYS!' The key words thump out like a drum beat and he says them again and again until they echo round the court.

'Aha, the Young Gentlemen disporting themselves', I say, beadily, but Christine says she finds their drunkenness merely disgusting. As I do. And anyway, as I go on to observe gloomily, they aren't Young Gentlemen. Christine is shocked by such arrant classism but I'm unrepentant. Furthermore, I point out crossly, the two on the grass aren't even accompanied, as rules require, by a Senior Member of the College. Obliging, the Senior Member with me pads off and circles them warily, prodding cautiously every now and again. But no corpses here, nor copulation neither, just sottish torpor.

The Senior Member, duty done and boredom settling fast, goes off to the bar to buy wine and all but collides with another staggering black-tied figure who's clutching his bottle like a security-blanket. He advances uncertainly on the horizontal couple who heave a little now and then with little conviction and less co-ordination. 'Get up, you gay shits!', he bellows. And was it for this, I muse, that we fought so long a battle to replace 'queer' with 'gay' only to hear it now, established as firmly as its predecessors in the language of vulgar abuse? Christine has no time for such self-indulgent maunderings. 'Straight shits, I think you mean', she shouts briskly. Black Tie weaves in our direction and spits. I am outraged. Christine spits back. I am scandalised. Efficiently she stems my strictures by pointing silently to the second couple, mute now and clinching in the shadow of a buttress. Black Tie has seen them too and stumbles off censoriously towards them. Suddenly he stops, shakes his head slowly in wondering defeat, and, solitary, makes for the bar once more.

A few days later I go to see *Before Stonewall*, a documentary about America's gay subculture during the first half of this century. Over footage of brightly butch Second World War GIs the narrator says 'Many a couple of soldiers set off of an evening in search of girls

and drink and ended up finding one another.' Quite so. In gay circles this is known as 'The Christ-was-I-drunk-last-night Syndrome.' And, Christ, was the 1st XV drunk last Tuesday.

Almost as drunk as international bankers, I learn a little later from a group of the same college's women undergraduates. With irritation they recall last Long Vacation Term's invasion of Big Spender conferees, many of whom seemed to think that Everything, but Everything was included in their fee. They clearly assumed the undergraduate women had also been laid on as part of the après-dinner entertainment. As I listen to the stories, I find myself astonished by the women's lack of anger. Disgust, yes, weariness, yes, but no fury. For me, to whom my (women's) college was a home in which I observed — and from which I assumed I had the right to demand — basic courtesies, their resigned acceptance is incomprehensible and disturbing. Theirs is far from Cambridge's poorest college. Is the bankers' money so vital that casual insults to the college's own undergraduate women members are considered fair exchange? And who did that particular sum? By now I yearn for vengeance. What I want to do is rush out, collar a brace of International Bankers, hurl them into the icy Cam and pass a happy night forcing them back under with boat-hooks every time they try to clamber out. But the bankers have long since flown, slapping each other on the back and yelling raucously 'Next time, Milan!'

ROGER WODDIS

You can't do enough

'There is a very British feeling in the land at the moment that enough has been done for the rich.' — Observer

Who dares to suggest what we feel?
Who cares what the moaners say?
Such envy destroyed the Bastille,
But has little meaning today.
The blows on the door must be withstood:
Mugging the poor is the highest good.

You can't do enough for the wealthy,
It's traitorous queering their pitch.
You've got to take pity
On sharks in the City,
You can't do enough for the rich.

You can't be too kind to the brokers,
You can't be too blind to their faults.
With profits advancing,
We ought to be dancing
In time to the Stock Exchange waltz.

It isn't right to bait the bears,
Or shout about the lady's shares.

You can't be too soft on the slickers,
Who burn with a monetary itch.
You can't do too little
For bones that are brittle,
You can't do enough for the rich.



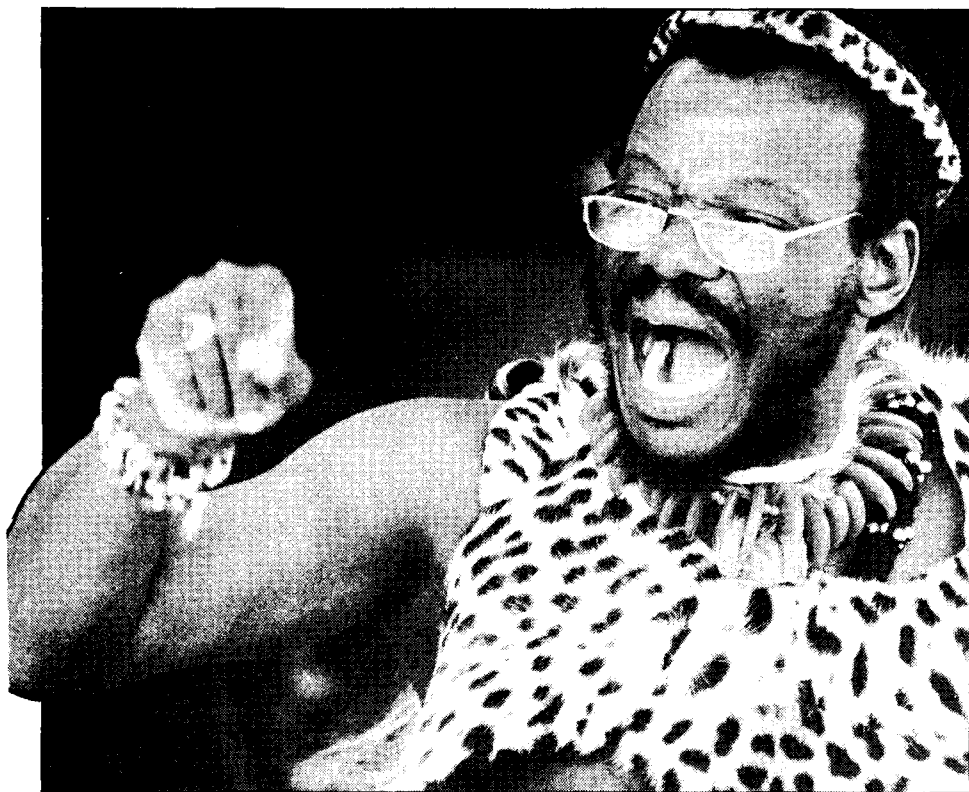
In my day, of course, College stood *in loco parentis* to its undergraduates until they were 21. And any parents might reasonably think that a college which imported grabby drunken men guaranteed to lunge at other people's daughters was a college neglecting its obligations. Now, with majority at 18, presumably it's all just too bad. Assault, harassment and verbal insult become a 'private' matter between assaulter and assaulted. Colleges are free to shake their heads, wring their hands and accept next year's repeat booking. But I wish they'd look for cleaner money (not to be confused with 'laundered').

As I leave the pleasant supper party at which the bankers' unlovely ways were first revealed, I turn onto Castle Hill and find a drunken undergraduate screaming insults and spoiling for a fight with two young townsmen. His sober and resigned male friend tries to restrain him while a young woman, more worried than cross, begs him to see reason. As the lights change, they frog-march him across the road while the older townsman employs skilful diversionary tactics on the younger. I plod up the hill after the undergraduates and the air echoes with the drunk's monotonous shrieks of 'Fucking wankers!' Turning to catch a glimpse of his adversary, he finds me instead and mutters confused apologies. I fix my face into the pained and glacial expression which befits a maiden lady of uncertain age subjected to verbal filth on the pavement but really what I mind almost more is his impoverished vocabulary. The young woman, more cross than worried, hurries him on past the police car that's patiently biding its time.

The delayed fight eventually and inevitably breaks out at the top of Castle Hill. The sober ones, especially the young woman, now not so much cross as hopping mad, break it up and the young townsman pours out to me that passionate, and frequently justified, resentment of Town against Gown which has formed an ugly counterpoint to Cambridge history for seven centuries.

One way and another, I'm a bit off drink at the moment.

CHIEF BUTHELEZI'S NEW TRIBALISM WASHES WHITER



Buthelezi, the *FT*'s 'man in the news' — 'a staunch defender of the free enterprise, capitalist system'

Thoroughly hyped by the media and industrialists as the 'sensible' alternative to the ANC, Chief Buthelezi's plans actually mimic Dr Verwoerd's 'grand design'. They offer no real political settlement, as RONALD SEGAL reports

AS THE APPROACH of revolution in South Africa appears to accelerate, the merchandising of tribalism is acquiring new and more sophisticated investors. They are not interested in the shop-soiled old lines identified with the failing enterprises of apartheid.

There are few buyers, at home or abroad, for the tribalist trash of a Transkei or a Kwa-Ndebele. But all the more is accordingly being made of goods that bear the Zulu label and come in protest packaging.

The marketing campaign for them was given a boost by the *Financial Times* on 15 February, which devoted its 'Man in the News' profile to the Zulu chief, Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi. Anthony Robinson, who wrote the piece, is clearly much taken by the vanished glories of Zulu kingship and the

potential of its heir to restore them. Buthelezi, we were assured, is directly descended, through his mother, from King Cetshawayo. He has resolutely rejected apartheid-style independence for the Zulu tribal homeland. He has consistently campaigned against the institution of South Africa's tricameral parliament, which excludes the black majority, while purveying ersatz representation for Coloured and Indian in separate annexes to the white house.

These credentials provide a window for the display of his charms. He is 'a staunch defender of the free enterprise, capitalist system'. He opposes external pressures which may stunt the country's economic growth and so the growth of black involvement in the economy. To allay white fears of what may follow from simple majority rule, he looks to the raising of a federal structure, on the basement of 'something less than a straight one man one vote.'

Such charms have already attracted the approval of Gavin Relly, head of the huge Anglo-American Corporation, whose own proposals for a federal structure differentiate not only between Coloured and White but between Zulus and Urban Blacks. In this complex of conflicting constituents, surely the State will continue to secure the interests of Anglo-American.

The South African government itself seems

sufficiently susceptible to Buthelezi's charms. It has allowed him to develop and deploy what is virtually a private court and army, even while he has publicly criticised the operations of apartheid and refused any obeisance to its 'grand design.' But then the principal purpose of that design, as it emerged from the fevered imagination of the late Dr Verwoerd, was to promote exclusive tribal allegiances, so as to divert blacks from combining against the regime.

Buthelezi's Inkatha movement, with its Zulu political revivalism, confronts the long engagement of the African National Congress to submerge, in a united democratic struggle, both tribal and racial distinctions of political identity. In its war against the ANC, the government can account Buthelezi effectively an ally.

And he is effectively an ally in another way. For while he may oppose homeland 'independence' in form, he in fact sustains the functioning of the 'independent' homeland system, by governing ZwaZulu as though it were like any other such homeland except for the meretricious trappings. His excuse is that this provides training in those administrative skills which will be so vital to black participation in the running of a non-racial South Africa. The argument has a Vichy smell about it.

But it would be quite wrong to conclude from all this that Buthelezi is merely a painted glove for the fingers of Pretoria. He is, unlike others who exercise subservient control over the 'independent' tribal homelands, very much his own man, with an ambition that reaches high beyond the defeat of white power. He seeks no less than a dominant place, as commander of the Zulu political cohorts, in the federally restructured South Africa for which he calls.

There are difficulties in the way of his progress. For all the presumptions that seem to be gathering force abroad by sheer repetition, the Zulus themselves are far from enclosed in Inkatha or otherwise united behind him. A recent public opinion poll of urban blacks in South Africa revealed not only diminutive support for Buthelezi, but smaller support for him than for Nelson Mandela, the ANC's representative on the list — even in Durban, where Zulus may be supposed to outnumber blacks of other tribal origins. And the longer the process of revolt, repression and resistance continues, the more popular and powerful must become the ANC, as the focus of challenge to the survival of the regime.

What Buthelezi must hope is that a 'negotiated settlement' in South Africa will deliver the sort of political situation in which institutionalised tribalism gives Inkatha, from its rural base, a pivotal position. But for such a

settlement to enjoy the slightest prospect of success, the support of the ANC would be necessary. And it is at just such a possibility that the *Financial Times's* profile of Buthelezi gave a side long glance.

'Despite the rivalry between the ANC and Inkatha, however, Chief Buthelezi and Mr Mandela, himself the prince of the rival Xhosa tribe, have continued to correspond with each other on terms of mutual respect. It is not inconceivable that the long-term future of South Africa will be determined not by the present white holders of power but these men who represent two branches of South Africa's main black nationalist tradition.'

IT IS NOT KNOWN what correspondence Mandela may have had with Buthelezi. But it would be astonishing if Mandela were to regard his royal lineage as particularly relevant to a political settlement, or would consider entering into negotiations for such a settlement except as a duly chosen representative of the ANC. And it would be astonishing too, if he recognised, in Buthelezi's present pretensions and activities, a branch of South Africa's main black nationalist tradition.

Political correspondents should be wary of personalising politics too far. The belief that particular people matter a great deal in the determination of events should never become a belief that principles matter little, if at all; and this is especially so where the political movement involved has a mass affiliation and a number of distinguished leaders.

None of this should suggest that the ANC leadership has set its face against negotiations. On the contrary, it has already outlined the circumstances in which negotiations may properly be pursued. It has also shown itself willing to discuss any proposals for a settlement that may make the transition more rapid and less costly. But it has persistently stressed that it will not retreat from the principles upon which the whole struggle of the ANC is based. The precise pace of change cannot reasonably be regarded as such a principle. But a federal system that represents and reinforces tribalism must deny the very first of these, in the commitment to a democratic South Africa.

The leaders of the ANC, whether in prison or directing from exile the military movement, are not about to turn their heads away from that vision and shuffle back into the movement's pre-history. Even if they were

together so disposed, they know all too well that they would carry very few of their followers with them. Those in the townships who drape their dead and their defiance in the colours of the ANC are not confronting the armour of white rule to provide Gavin Relly with the 'multi-racial oligarchy' he seeks, or Chief Buthelezi with the prerogatives of an anachronistic tribal dynasty.

There can be no political settlement of any substance on such terms. And the belief that there can is the most dangerous delusion. It

must ensure the very kind of protracted conflict that can do untold damage to the South African economy and to the potential for developing a non-racial society. Buthelezi is properly the subject of close attention. He represents a form of political intervention it would be foolish to ignore. But those who see a promise of peace at last among all that tribal regalia should pause to consider the consequences of misjudging, even yet, the force of the democratic revolution which the ANC represents. □

ITALY: THE LEFT IN FLUX

BETTINO CRAXI CALLS FOR TALKS

Italian communists and socialists are making friends again. Maybe it's time, says DONALD SASSOON, for the entire European Left to rejig

ON ST VALENTINE'S Day 1984, the Italian government led by socialist Prime Minister Bettino Craxi unilaterally 'modified' the index-linked scale of wages which partially protected all Italian wage earners from the effects of inflation. The move effectively ended the unwritten 'social contract' between successive Italian governments and organised labour.

The communist majority in the largest of the three Italian unions, the CGIL, opposed the move. One million workers demonstrated in the streets of Rome but to no avail. The Communist Party (PCI) fought the government decree in parliament and collected the signatures required to force a referendum, which was held last June and which resulted in a defeat for the communists.

Since then the Socialist Party (PSI), running the five party coalition in government in Rome, has proceeded to break-up most of the communist-socialist coalitions which had controlled the leading Italian cities since the mid-seventies. Not even during the sixties, when the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Socialists formed the first centre-left governments, have the communists appeared as isolated.

Yet Craxi's ruling coalition is far from united. It has been unable to pass important financial legislation because, even though it has nearly 60 per cent of the seats in parliament, MPs belonging to the majority often break party discipline and vote secretly with the communist opposition. On foreign policy, the *Achille Lauro* hi-jacking affair last year revealed the wide gap in the government between the pro-American lobby, led by the Republican Party and including some factions of the DC, and the increasingly independent-minded Craxi.

The right-wing Christian Democrats resent more and more the fact that Craxi, the leader of a party which won little more than 11 per cent

of the vote, has been the longest serving Prime Minister since Mussolini. The DC, with three times the PSI's electoral strength, seems unable to regain the leadership of the government. Craxi may well survive until the next elections due by 1988.

Unlike the DC, however, Craxi has an alternative: to move instead closer to the communists and establish the foundation for a left-wing coalition. At present this may seem an unlikely outcome for Craxi is despised and feared by many communists. He is seen by them to be authoritarian, opportunist, devoid

'Craxi is seen by the communists as authoritarian, opportunist and devoid of any serious intention to promote radical reforms'

of any serious intention to promote radical reforms and only too keen to play the DC's own game of patronage and corruption. But the PCI could not afford to reject whatever overtures the PSI make, even if they appeared to be just a tactical device used by Craxi to blackmail the DC. Thus when Craxi declared that it was time to initiate a dialogue 'at least at the cultural level' between the two parties of the Left, the PCI responded swiftly. On St. Valentine's day this year, the communist-aligned *Centro per la Riforma dello Stato* and the PSI-controlled Pietro Nenni Foundation organised a major conference in Rome on the theme of the relation between communists and socialists.

The main paper was delivered by Norberto Bobbio, the most distinguished political philosopher in Italy who is respected by both communists and socialists. Bobbio said that the PCI had every right to be included in a

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

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governing coalition; that the PSI and the PCI owed it to the country to decide seriously whether they could agree on a common programme; and that a new government excluding the Christian Democrats was necessary to provide Italy with a way out from the *immobilismo* to which it has been condemned by the succession of DC-dominated governments.

A stream of communist and socialist politicians and intellectuals, including two cabinet ministers and Rinaldo Formica, leader of the PSI parliamentary group, made cautiously positive remarks about the need to continue the dialogue. A German socialist member of parliament reminded the audience that day that the Italian Communists were closer to his German Social Democratic party than to the French CP and that not just in Italy but in the whole of Europe left-wing unity had to be created: there can no longer be *national* solutions.

What then was the real significance of all this? A strong tactical element is the desire of the PSI to stop quarrelling with the PCI. But there is something else as well. Until recently the Italian socialists assumed that the Left had to be revived by jettisoning much of its traditions, accepting some of the positions of the 'New Right' and embracing its language: managerial prerogatives, anti-statism. The only alternative seemed to be to enclose oneself in one's past, like French communists defending all the sacred cows of the labour movement.

The ambition of the PSI under Craxi was to create a technocratic and moderate socialist party which would destroy the Italian Communist Party's electoral strength by appealing to the so-called 'emergent social groups' in 'high tec' activities. The idea of 'breaking the mould' became fashionable in

Italy at the same time as it did in other countries. But the tactic has not really paid off, for PCI refused to play its allotted role. Instead it has continued to develop its independent line, independent particularly of Moscow.

Furthermore, it is no longer as clear as it was until perhaps a year ago that the Western governments would simply accept unquestioningly all features of US hegemony. The voice of European autonomy is beginning to make itself heard, not only in the German SPD and in the French government but even in the British Conservative Party with the Westland affair.

The Left in Europe has suffered many wounds, some self-inflicted. But it is just possible that it may have learnt a thing or two from the mistakes of the past. In the next three years, there will be presidential elections in France and in the US, and general elections in Britain, Italy and West Germany. This conjuncture offers the Left a major chance for a realignment of the balance of political forces in Europe.

This is the time not only to re-think the relations between the two wings of the labour movement in Italy, but also to begin the long-term task of defining what a European socialist strategy might be. The Labour Party in Britain has so far kept out of the fray. Its traditional insularity and its anti-Europeanism has condemned it to a position of irrelevance in mainstream European socialism. The antics of its representatives at the European Parliament have made it into a laughing stock.

Yet it seems that even in the Labour Party something is changing: socialism in one country is no longer fashionable: the European card seems to be the only alternative to the old Atlanticism. It is time that Labour entered European politics with some energy and conviction. □

ITALY: MORE BITTER COFFEE

HAS P2 CLAIMED ANOTHER VICTIM?

AMANDA MITCHISON on the death of Michele Sindona, banker, stockbroker, and Vatican adviser extraordinary

Rome

THE VATICAN FINANCIER Michele Sindona never wanted to be extradited from the United States to Italy. He made frequent reference to the fate of Pischotta, a famous Sicilian underworld figure who was silenced in prison with a 'bitter coffee'.

Last week Sindona was poisoned with cyanide, probably in his morning coffee. Round-the-clock telecameras, sealed and locked mess tins and a specially designed high security prison unit had been of no avail.

Four years ago Sindona's close associate

Robert Calvi was found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge, his suit packed with stones, and his feet washing the tide in true masonic tradition.

'God's Bankers' have died remarkable deaths: ostentatious, untraceable and probably intended as warnings to others. Calvi died while fleeing the Italian authorities; Sindona had just received a life sentence for instigating the murder of Giorgio Ambrosoli, liquidator of one of his banks. Both were in desperate situations and had threatened to give names.

Their banking activities depended on contacts with the P2 masonic lodge, government officials, the Vatican — and, in the case of Sindona, with the Mafia. Both speculated wildly on the Milan stock exchange and created financial empires using strings of ghost holding companies in Panama and Liechtenstein and in the world's most respectable offshore bank — the Vatican Institute for Religious Works. □

Sindona began his career selling black market lemons in Sicily during the Second World War. He later opened a law practice and moved to Milan where he branched out into business, bought a small Milanese bank and became friends with Licio Gelli, leader of the P2, and with Cardinal Montini.

When Montini was elected Pope Paul VI, Sindona became the Vatican's chief financial adviser and stockbroker and continued to develop contacts, buy up banks and companies and launder Mafia money. By the late 60s Sindona's empire was beginning to crumble and he transferred operations to the United States where he bought controlling interest in the ailing Franklin National Bank.

In late 1974, despite a \$100 million salvage package from the Bank of Rome and nearly \$1.7 billion in loans from the US banking authorities, Sindona's empire finally cracked. Coming in the midst of an international economic crisis, his bankruptcy had a world wide impact and plunged the Milan stock exchange into severe depression.

Sindona's financial instability was apparent long before 1974, but the banker had the support of the Christian Democrat Party, in particular of Amintore Fanfani and Giulio Andreotti (now foreign minister), who as late as 1973 praised Sindona publicly as the 'saviour of the lire'.

Political intervention has delayed and hindered the process of uncovering Sindona's affairs and bringing him to justice. Ugo La Malfa, the then minister of the treasury, who opposed a second loan to the banker in 1974, wrote that 'half of Italy had been pressurising me on Sindona's behalf'. Ambrosoli's widow claims that she was isolated and received no support when she attempted to speed up Sindona's extradition.

Nor did Sindona's charisma and financial talent disguise the nature of his operations; the smell of burning was strong. Sindona's manner also did not enduce trust; he suffered from a nervous tic and while he talked would fiddle with bits of paper, producing origami boats and birds.

Sindona may well have killed to prevent him from revealing the notorious 'list of 500' — his supposed clients who used his connections with the Vatican to transfer capital out of Italy. Sindona's Mafia connections, and his fake kidnapping to Sicily after the Ambrosoli murder, have also never been clarified.

Few Italians believe Sindona committed suicide. His family and those who saw him before the poisoning exclude the possibility and claim his mood was combative rather than despairing. Had he taken his own life, the mystery of who gave him the cyanide would still remain.

Sindona's murder adds to the evidence that the P2, or some equivalent system of 'parallel power' lives on. P2 members still retain important posts in most spheres of public life; right-wing terrorism goes virtually unpunished; and Italians view their government with the same habitual cynicism.

According to Francesco Pazienza, the entrepreneur of the Italian Secret Service, Sindona's murder was not a one-off affair and Pazienza himself is next on the list when he is extradited to Italy. Another predictable/avoidable murder? □

LETTERS

Foot's fondness for Powell

Bob Cant, London N4

I am surprised that Francis Wheen's review of Michael Foot's new book, *Loyalists and Lovers* (NS 14 March), made almost no reference to his discussion of Enoch Powell's views on race.

Powell is responsible for legitimizing public expression of racist views. Whatever his motives were is almost irrelevant when one considers the impact that his 'rivers of blood' speech and other subsequent speeches had on perceptions of race, at both the individual and collective level, in this country. Foot, however, seems ignorant of these developments and talks of the whole issue in terms of Powell's personal integrity and career. He is eager to tell us that Powell is 'no racist, a man obsessed with hatred for others with different colour skins' without any acknowledgment of the fact that a racist can also be someone who judges people's lives primarily in terms of their racial origin, in ways that may not be obsessive. The non-obsessive racism can be just as devastating as the obsessive for the communities and individuals on the receiving end.

Foot also tells us that Powell's failure to reach the 'highest office in the state' because of his views on race was a tragedy not only for Powell himself, but also 'for the rest of us too'. As a white anti-racist, I can only feel an enormous sense of relief that he was denied access to that office; I imagine that my relief can only be a fraction of that felt in communities such as Broadwater Farm or Toxteth or Brick Lane.

To examine Powell's record, as Foot does, in such a narrow way is frightening, not only because of what it tells us about Foot, but also about the enclosed world of Westminster. We have known for years about the reputation of the House of Commons as a 'gentleman's club'; it is now clear that it also resembles those European clubs which used to disgrace the urban centres of Britain's colonies. The presence of Black MPs such as Diane Abbott and Bernie Grant in the next Parliament will hopefully render that atmosphere of cosy racism less tenable.

We wanted Live Aid

Jeremy Isaacs, Chief Executive, Channel 4

Your nasty little paragraph in 'Miscellany' (NS 21 March) is inaccurate and a slur on an able young man, John Cummins.

Bob Geldof did offer us Live Aid but needed a decision that afternoon and stipulated, reasonably, that we provide a stereo radio simulcast with the television transmission. Unfortunately, we have no access to such a facility. John Cummins could not have done more to urge the project on me, or been more disappointed that we had to pass.

Grossness of the national product

Martin H. Ryle, Lewes, W. Sussex

Professor Maurice Peston ('Going gently down the drain', NS 14 March) reiterates the view that faster economic growth is the key to resolving our social problems. I trust that I'm not alone in being rather dismayed by the ecological heedlessness and First-world chauvinism of his article: where are the resources for an unlimited expansion of 'product' to come from, and should we really be worrying about whether we can keep up with 'the world's major economies' while so many millions of people lack even clean water and food?

But, leaving aside these larger issues (they always are left aside, it seems), one may question the claim that 'economic growth' is a desirable objective even for Britain. Among many counter-arguments, the following seem particularly relevant to the debate among socialists:

- In employment terms, it is by now quite clear that 'technological advance' (we need look no further than Wapping) does not create jobs, but gets rid of them;
- 'Gross domestic product' is indeed a gross measure, in which any profitable production (Trident warheads, SDI software, Rolls Royces for the rich) counts as a plus entry. Is this what socialists believe in?
- Massive post-war growth (per capita GNP more than doubled between 1950 and 1970) has not eliminated poverty and deprivation. Social justice and a right way of living depend, not on how much we produce, but on *what* we produce, and how it is shared out;
- By any historical comparison, and in stark contrast to the lot of many of our fellows, we average Britons are fantastically wealthy. But Professor Peston himself acknowledges that social malaise and individual misery are still with us. Isn't it clear that happiness depends, not just on how much 'product' we can consume, but on many other factors? And may it not depend, in fact, on some of the 'non-economic goods' (beautiful surroundings, interesting work, communal solidarity) which have been systematically destroyed by the very growth-

oriented capitalism which we are still being exhorted to pursue?

All in the nervous system

K. Bell, London E7

Animal rights are not exclusively the concern of the Left, nor should they be. But because socialists usually have more awareness of injustice and exploitation, and more interest in eliminating them than do conservatives, animal rights (like those of women, gays, and racial minorities) are more likely to be taken up by the Left.

Paul Teasdale (Letters, 7 March) thinks the oppression of animals is not the same as that of women and Blacks, yet all oppression involves exploitation of the relatively powerless by the relatively powerful. It serves the same ends; the advantage of the oppressing group in terms of status, privilege and material gain. It can be corrected in the same way: by parallel programmes of education and legislation.

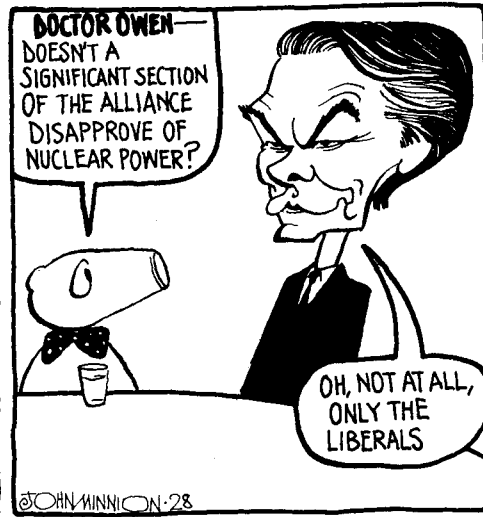
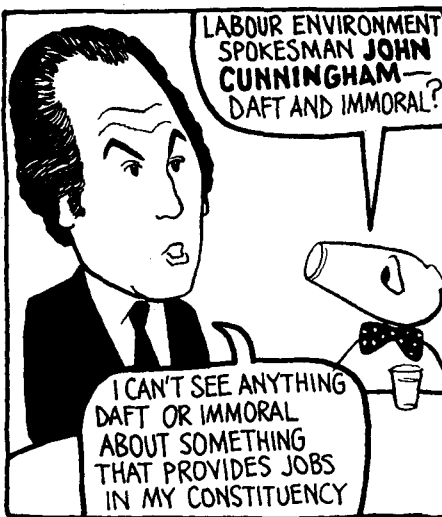
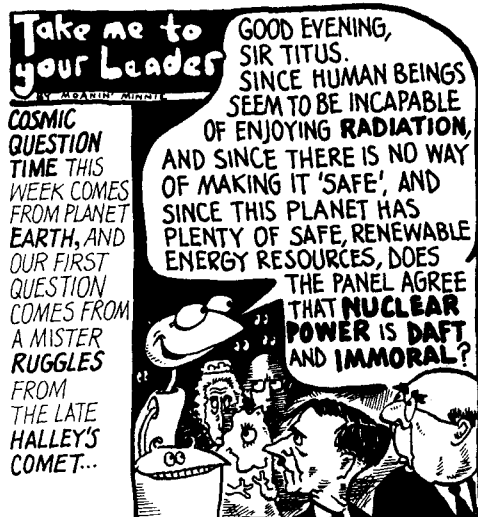
Equating animals with buildings is meaningless. A building, having no consciousness, cannot have or need rights. The nervous system so lightly dismissed by Paul Teasdale is crucial to the argument. There is nothing metaphysical about it, it is a biological fact. As Paul Teasdale cannot distinguish between animals and buildings, it would be interesting to know what he sees as the distinction between animals and people. But he had better be careful how he answers; this could get very metaphysical indeed.

Smarmy xenophobia

Jack Altman, Paris, France

For the past 14 years I have lived in France, a country renowned for its blatant xenophobia. After a visit to London, I have to conclude that the blatancy is something of a blessing compared with the more insidious form of xenophobia I discovered at my Russell Square hotel. There, posted on the door of my room beside the usual exhortation to put personal valuables in the hotel's safe-deposit, was the explanation: 'London is a cosmopolitan city — please take care of your possessions.'

When I complained about the insulting implications of this notice, the man at the reception desk said: 'There's no need to be upset, sir, you're not a foreigner, are you?'





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The work of womankind

Catherine Belsey

Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism

ed. GAYLE GREENE and COPPELIA KAHN
Methuen £14.95 & £5.95

The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory

ed. ELAINE SHOWALTER *Virago* £11.95 & £5.95

FEMINIST CRITICISM has come of age. Eighteen years on from Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women*, these two collections of essays are elegant, accomplished and quite free from the (tomboyish?) high spirits that antagonised some women and electrified others in the early years. Feminist criticism is now ready to assume adult responsibilities. Confidently, fluently, readably, both *Making a Difference* and *The New Feminist Criticism* reiterate the case for reading as a woman, point to the work that has already been done and define a series of projects for the future.

Both these volumes are predominantly American. Taken together, they give the impression that before the advent of feminism literary criticism was even more misogynistic there than it was here. Elaine Showalter reprints Nina Baym's witty analysis of the American literary canon as a series of 'melodramas of beset manhood'. In the Great American Novel man (and the sexist term is the appropriate one) seeks the freedom that comes from escaping the constraints of the social. In the end real men always light out, like Huckleberry Finn, for the Territory. Women, as agents of domestication and socialisation, try to hold them back. Meanwhile, however, the Territory too is identified as feminine — but this time in the right way. The wilderness invites conquest and once subdued it becomes compliant, nurturing, supportive.

Repeatedly these feminist critics insist that the American equivalent of the Great Tradition does not include a single woman author. British values have not been quite so overtly virile. Since the Thirties at least Jane Austen, the Brontës and George Eliot have been taken seriously. Of F.R. Leavis's four great English novelists two were women.

And yet courses on women's writing and feminist criticism are now much more common, more acceptable in the United States than they are here. Perhaps in the Home of



Christine Roche

Human Rights things were easier for the feminists? It was not hard to demonstrate that women writers had been systematically excluded from equal access to the pursuit of happiness. Harriet Beecher Stowe was not taken seriously; Kate Chopin was reviled; lesbians and black women had no voice at all. Among the feminist critics of the Seventies Showalter herself was one of the pioneers in giving back to women a literature of their own. Both these new volumes reaffirm and develop that project.

Was there, however, a price to pay for the success of feminist criticism in the States? The

emphasis has been on reinstating writing by women, broadening the canon to include what has been repressed. Women's writing, varying with race, class and sexual orientation, is held to emanate from women's culture and is seen as expressive of women's experience. But, as Lilian Robinson points out in the Showalter collection, this project of inclusive pluralism doesn't go much beyond a new kind of populism and in a programme for the reorganisation of social relations populism doesn't go very far at all.

In this instance it leaves in place what seem to me some very dubious assumptions about literary criticism. One of these is the belief that fiction is a transcription of the author's experience of real life. Another is that the purpose of criticism is to evaluate the fiction and thus the experience. And yet another is that readers will in some not very clearly specified way derive benefit from the works of fiction prescribed by critics. These commonplaces have not proved very progressive in the past.

British feminist criticism, developing in a different cultural context, has tended to move in another direction. In Britain the sexist assumptions of conventional criticism, though no less powerful, have been at first glance less glaring. Women were included in the Great Tradition. But this was always on the unspoken condition that they were not treated as women. Similarly, the fact that Elizabeth Bennet, Jane Eyre and Dorothea Brooke were women also conventionally went unmentioned and their struggles for identity and independence in a patriarchal society were represented as the necessary process of learning to bring their unruly dispositions under moral control.

Obviously the sexism of the reading process was not to be transformed simply by putting more women authors on the syllabus and British feminism consequently took a rather different turn. The only one of these essays which I know to be British is Rosalind Coward's 'Are Women's Novels Feminist Novels?' in the Showalter collection. As the title indicates, Coward raises questions about the difference between being a female and being a feminist (between anatomy and politics) and between telling it (like it is, or otherwise) and intervening in it in order to change things. An essay about the politics of form, Coward's stands out from most of the others in its attention to writing itself, to the ways in which fiction addresses readers.

Ann Rosalind Jones, who writes in both volumes about French feminism, also displays the kind of political edge more familiar to feminists on this side of the Atlantic. 'We need,' she argues in the Showalter collection, 'to know how women have come to be who they are through history . . . and only then will we discover what women are or can be.'

And that perhaps is the point for a feminism which wants to move beyond populism towards a politics of change. In this context what women can be matters as much as what they have experienced. But what we take to be possible depends on how we understand both what we are and what history has made us.

Women's experience, at least as far back as it is documented, has been experience of or



You need to know
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within patriarchal societies. To that extent it needs to be analysed as an effect of culture, not its origin. If women are better at personal relationships (and we are), if women are more caring and more compassionate (and we may be), we are so not only in the context of a patriarchal culture but also as a consequence of it. In the liberal West the place that has been allotted to women is precisely private, emotional, supportive and nurturing.

What more we can be is to some extent conjectural, but we can best discuss it on the basis of an analysis which firmly frees both women and men from the determinism of the natural. It is because experience is culturally produced that experience itself can change.

Feminism needs to recover women's writing. But it also needs to produce a historical and cultural analysis of the system of differences which has held women in place. Nelly Furman in the Greene and Kahn volume draws on new developments in critical theory to move in this direction. She argues that the institution of marriage, which depends on the affirmation of a polarity between men and women, serves as an analogy for a feminist criticism which finally reaffirms the position of women as the *opposite* sex. 'Women's writing' is always what is *not* men's writing, is always the transcription of an experience which is identified as inevitably other. This is not just 'making a difference': it's freezing it into place. Neither marriage nor the reinstatement of women's writing quite makes the break that will release us from the constraints of the stereotype. □

Dildoes

Fiona Pitt-Kethley

Dildoes — they come in varied size and shape —
five foot, five six, six foot, fair, middling, dark.

Is it too much to ask for brains as well
as balls? OK, I've had my share of thrills —
the times when everything's well choreographed —
I put my glass down as we start to kiss;
nothing is spilt; our fastenings all undo
and everything comes off; our heights match well;
I fit him like a glove.

Yet I feel trapped in some dark Sci-Fi film —
my task, it seems, is sussing robots out.
They look so human it's quite hard to tell
until the things go on about their cars
or use the same set piece to chat you up.
(The one part they can't simulate's the mind).

Some leave the works in a half-programmed state —
these are the easiest ones to spot — I saw
a cheap Italian model in South Ken,
'Disco?' it went, then, 'Whisky — vodka — rum —
bacardi — coke?' and, 'Fucky-fucky in hotel?'
'No thanks!' I said. Its batteries ran down.

I think I'm still a virgin mentally —
I'm thirty and I've had no *real* man.
I'd like to, though, just for the novelty.

**'Terribly, terminally funny: laughter
in the dark, if ever I heard it'**

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BOOKS

As I was saying

Michael Goldfarb

Talking to Myself: A Memoir of my Times

STUDS TERKEL *Harrap* £9.95

CLICHÉS ABOUT geographical places and their inhabitants — Liverpudlians are cheeky, New Yorkers are rude — are a staple of friendly conversation. They have no meaning. They go down well with beer. Except in the case of Chicago. Chicago is a city that lives up to its clichés: 'City of the broad shoulder', 'Hog butcher to the world.'

It is the last of those miraculous American cities where faith, hope and not too much charity survived in the face of xenophobia and the filth of rat-infested cold water tenements. A city where one block is Swedish, the next Norwegian, the next Polish and the centuries-old resentments of the Thirty Years War and every other Baltic conflict co-exist with the incurable optimism of the American experiment.

A thousand miles from an ocean, five hundred miles from a mountain, with a Siberian climate, Chicago is, despite the fortunes that have been made there, a working man's city. A place where one's worth is determined by one's capacity for hard work. Chicago's intellectuals and culture makers have always had to take notice of working people, 'the ordinary Joe'. From Blues Men to novelists like Nelson Algren and James T. Farrell, their ideas have had to hold up on the street corner and in the tavern before the academy and the Ivy halls of the effete.

Arguably, the city has become the most vital source of American culture. In New York and Los Angeles, winched together by hi-tech cable, cultural expression has been replaced by marketing concepts. Chicago has been bypassed by the coast to coast world. The American theatre has been saved by David Mamet and his Chicago cohorts. The great tradition of the ornery American intellectual iconoclast, part populist, part radical, part sentimentalist, still flourishes there.

Studs Terkel is a perfect example of the type. He took a law degree at the University of Chicago and then turned his back on the privilege to which that credential entitled him. He worked as a labour organiser, then a disc jockey playing Ellington, Caruso, Armstrong, Chaliapin and Leadbelly on his programme. He hosted a television show in which the 'dreams and realities of ordinary people were acted out'. The show was cancelled at the height of the McCarthy hysteria. Right about then Studs discovered the tape recorder. Medium and method jelled and he has been recording people ever since.

He has grown into an American institution eliciting eloquent testimony from people, ordinary and extraordinary, about their lives and work and publishing their thoughts in books like *Hard Times* and *Working*. The latter was even turned into a Broadway musical.

From time to time Terkel has done some monologising about himself into his machine. Now 74, he has collected these pieces, added some new ones and come up with a book that is not really a biography nor, despite the volume's subtitle, a memoir. It is more a series of wonderful bar-room reminiscences. Terkel is a great talker. The book's method is rambling discourse and free association. A chapter on a clandestine visit to a South African Zulu Leader touches off memories of the Chicago Red Squad, FBI House calls, the white socks invariably worn by American security police and ends up improbably in the home of his white South African driver prodding his wife to sing an Afrikaans song.

He spins yarns about his baptism in the unique corruption of Chicago politics and the insights into human behaviour growing up in a Chicago boarding house. There is eyewitness testimony on the riots at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago and the Selma to Montgomery Freedom March in 1965. Being an American iconoclast he is attracted to the British variety and there are portraits of Bertrand Russell, A. S. Neill and James Cameron. The most moving reminiscences are of Mahalia Jackson and Big Bill Broonzy.

Those familiar with Terkel's previous books and hoping for grand insights into the human condition based on his lifetime's work will be disappointed by the book's lack of personal revelation. He quotes generously from others. They do his talking for him. Lack of epiphany aside, the book is always entertaining. The terminally cynical will have a hard time digesting Terkel's undying belief in the pragmatic goodness of the ordinary guy. Those who still believe in human possibilities will take pleasure in his wonderful stories. □

Behind the study door

Kate Kellaway

Beloved Quixote: The Unknown Life of John Middleton Murry

KATHERINE MIDDLETON MURRY *Souvenir* £14.95

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY described himself as a 'dead cabbage . . . something very tight and yellow with a faintly unpleasant smell'. Katherine Middleton Murry's biography banishes the cabbage from sight, does not even hint that some of John Middleton Murry's contemporaries may also have entertained the cabbage theory. *Beloved Quixote* is a tribute from a daughter to a Father. John Middleton Murry claimed that what distinguished him from his contemporaries was his 'tremendous desire to admire'. Like her father, Katherine Middleton Murry has a desire to admire and in this book, as in her life, she has made John Middleton Murry her hero.

She is like her father in other ways too. They both write with fatalism and intensity

combined with attractive clarity. This book combines their voices and the result is a cross between biography and autobiography. The period it describes in most detail is Katherine Middleton Murry's childhood which she spent in Larling, Norfolk, with her step-mother Betty, John's third wife. In marrying Betty, John was marrying one of D.H. Lawrence's theories. Betty was an earth mother with a temper of fire. She was not an intellectual and she ruled with a rod of iron (or anything else that came to hand) crying 'Bugger them all!' at her family. Through much of this, John Middleton Murry would be on the safe side of the study door, which Betty, not unnaturally, resented but which Katherine Middleton Murry never criticises. One squirms slightly at the patronising comments John makes about his wife's temper, putting it all down to a lack of birthday cake as a child — 'That explains a terrible lot.'

When John Middleton Murry does exit from his study, he is remembered making toffee or appearing as a French-speaking tramp and begging for money from his partly-deceived children. He and his daughter were similar in their way of dealing with life under Betty. 'I learned to become a shadow,' Katherine Middleton Murry says. While John Middleton Murry describes a shadow of a different kind: 'I live as it were, in the world, out of a sense of obligation . . . the secret "I" longs to retire, to retire . . .'

The biography contains the tragedy of delayed understanding: knowledge arriving

too late, although it is not clear whether Katherine Middleton Murry intends it to be seen in this way.

Why is it now and only now that I can recognise these presences for what they are. I do not know. Perhaps all things have their appointed time to be transformed from poor ghosts haunting us and full of pain into benign and resplendent realities.

This is puzzling in that there are no benign or resplendent realities in this biography. Instead there are two unmistakable ghosts: Katherine Mansfield and Violet le Maistre, Katherine Middleton Murry's mother. This book brings out the strange similarity between the two women: their handwriting, their appearance and their deaths. The similarity in appearance was deliberately emphasised by Violet who cut her hair in the same stern bob as Katherine. Both died of T.B. John Middleton Murry had a theory that, in a spiritual sense, Katherine Middleton Murry was Katherine Mansfield's daughter thus completing the confusion of identity.

The second part of the book is more autobiographical than the first. Katherine Middleton Murry writes as if speaking aloud for the first time: 'Earth please take me! Earth where can I go?' Her unhappiness is never at odds with her loyalty to her father. Yet, in spite of the love with which he is remembered, John Middleton Murry remains shadowy behind his study door.

Come buy

Simon Frith

Consuming Passions

JUDITH WILLIAMSON *Marion Boyars* £12.95

I USED TO HAVE a column in *Melody Maker* called Consuming Passion. For me the pun was plain. I was writing about an industry which packages intense emotions and I was writing as an obsessive pop user myself. Judith Williamson take the same pun and gives it extra weight. For her, 'passions born out of imbalance, insecurity, the longing for something more, find forms in the objects and relations available; so that energies fired by what might be, become the fuel for what is.' This is commodity fetishism. 'Popular' culture, in tugging at the ties that usually bind us, the ligaments of money and power and sex, just pulls them tighter. Cash and goods change hands; dissatisfaction is displayed only in the moments of market satisfaction. To put it more mundanely, at the end of a wearing week I cruise the record shops — the excitement comes in the act of purchasing, not from the later listening.

Williamson argues that commodities aren't just 'congealed labour', Marx's description, but also 'congealed longing'. Cultural goods

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BOOKS

get their power from the desires invested in them by their purchasers and, in turn, shape these desires, give them their social significance. Cultural criticism means investigating these shapes to reveal the ways in which they contain subversive demands and this collection of articles confirms that, for this project, Judith Williamson is the best cultural critic we've got.

Her book is organised in four sections, covering constructions of femininity, visual representation, cinema and the ideology of everyday life. As a collection of magazine pieces it is, inevitably, variable in both tone and conviction. Williamson is weakest in her general responses to social phenomena (like the Walkman), strongest in her detailed readings of texts, whether the photography of Cindy Sherman, the 'discovery' of the G Spot, the films of Doris Day or the Royal Family. Her skill is to take interpretative approaches like semiology out of the academy and into the market commentary of weekly journalism, to make earnest points with wit and precision.

The critical decoding of goods and images that their consumers read without thinking is harder than it seems. It means walking a tightrope between the obvious and the obscure, between compulsive self-deprecation and nagging self-righteousness, and Williamson's consistently good balance depends on two assumptions that left cultural theorists often reject. She takes it for granted that consumption is a material as well as ideological issue - it needs money! - and it goes without question too that she is a consumer herself - she writes out of a sense of personal collusion with the enemy. Her most brilliant essay, on Cindy Sherman, shows how women are implicated, even as spectators and scholars, in the processes in which 'woman' and 'man' take on meaning. So are men, but we've long been armed with the rhetorical pretence of personal detachment.

Williamson is the most incisive pop culture commentator presently at work in the left press, but en bloc her articles do reveal continuing analytic problems. Like all critics, she's much clearer on texts, on finished codes, than on what, exactly, is in them for (and from) consumers. She rejects psychoanalysis of desire, but her sociological account of tastes and needs rooted in the material conditions of class and gender rests on sparse evidence. 'The reason council tenants want to buy their houses is quite simple,' she asserts. 'They are not besotted with the idea of *ownership*; they are gripped by the need for *security*.' The fact that teenage girls both worshipped and tried to look like Boy George suggests 'a wish to *be* the object of desire as much as to "have" him, in other words, to be the recipient rather than the initiator of passions.' Perhaps, but such confident readings of consumer behaviour need the support of the consumers' own words.

In other essays Williamson makes a dubious equation between her own readers - the self-consciously in-tune *City Limits* set - and the popular cultural audience as a whole, and her journalistic concern for neat argument sometimes tempts her into glib classifications (60s vs 50s films, for example) more suited to a performing media flea like Julie Burchill. But

the importance of Williamson's overall argument can't be overstated. Resisting the lures of post-modernism, a good socialist humanist, she makes clear that people's needs may be met momentarily by consumer goods but they're not satisfied or defined by them. People aren't blank screens across which signs play. Socialism can still claim to meet human capacities - for democracy, for control, for joy - that capitalism can only fragment and frustrate. □

FICTION

Lives of quiet despair

Grace Ingoldby

Fiela's Child

DALENE MATTHEE *Viking* £9.95

The Handmaid's Tale

MARGARET ATWOOD *Cape* £9.95

The Afternoon Sun

DAVID PRYCE-JONES *Weidenfeld* £8.95

Figures of Enchantment

ZULFIKAR GHOSE *Hutchinson* £10.95

Zorn

JONAH JONES *Heinemann* £9.95

'THERE'S A DAY coming when only God will be able to help us', Fiela tells her hand-child, Benjamin, during the precious few days left to them after the census officials, 'the peace-breakers', have made their first and brutal call. Fiela is a strong, hardworking, proud woman, owner of the land called Wokwekraal around which she has 'built a wall with her tongue' to protect her family, but even here, in 19th-century Africa, in the open land beyond the mountains and the Knysna forest, self-righteous and small-minded bureaucrats hold sway.

Fiela's Child is the story of Benjamin, the founding dumped outside her door, whom she brought up and loved until the peace-breakers discovered him some nine years later, taking him far away to where they insist he belongs. The proud Fiela 'slithers like a snake' before authority but to no avail and privately rages against God but the image of her hand-child remains in her heart and the child, uprooted, no longer certain who he is, never forgets her. Matthee is an outstanding storyteller; the communities on the edge of Africa a hundred years ago, the forest world where the elephants, 'big feet', walk their ancient paths and the wild waters of the Indian Ocean around the Black Rocks and The Head come alive to her touch, making this novel everything a novel can be: convincing, thought-provoking, upsetting, unforgettable and timeless. 'You can't just come and take somebody's child away', Fiela protests, but you can of course if its surrogate mother happens to be coloured and if the child, who knows no other mother, no other life, happens to be white.

Up-to-the-minute female guilt is the spice

for Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale**. In 21st-century America the Sect Wars continue as the bible backlash hits home. The halcyon days of adulterous liaisons, 'family planning', property-owning working women and the familiar jingle of the pornmobile are long gone. The Republic of Gilead rules by the book, the Book of Genesis, and Offred, the handmaid of the story, is just one among many red-cloaked, white-veiled women condemned to operate as 'two legged wombs'. Twentieth-century decadence, syphilis, the AIDS epidemic and genetic deformities linked to nuclear plant accidents have resulted in a fertile ovary becoming a national resource. The handmaids are the torch of the future, for breeding purposes only please, sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices, prisoners for whom, because some still remember the way it was, life is far from fun.

Atwood's story, told with her usual wicked irony, is far-fetched but not impossible and plays brilliantly on niggling feminist doubts. Offred's horrid predicament behind her shatterproof window (suicide is rife) is interspersed with flashbacks: the morning when women's bank accounts were frozen and she and her colleagues were told they'd lost their jobs: 'It's outrageous one woman said, but without belief. What was it about this that made us feel we deserved it?'

'To have nothing to lose is the beginning of opportunity' — a saying attributed to the orphan Baron Gustav, financial wizard, unregenerate goblin, man of astounding appetite (he once ordered 'Veal for half an hour') who made a killing in Vienna in 1873 and marked it by another maxim, 'Sell to the sound of violins buy to the sound of cannon.'

The Afternoon Sun is the story of Gustav and his survivors told through the eyes of grandson Julius whose parents were murdered as Jews during the Second World War. This is a fine, disciplined, moving but unsentimental novel written in short chapters that open and close always to the point. Pryce-Jones writes in a curiously effective rhythm, his words hitting the reader like a series of well-aimed, well-timed slaps. Emotion swirls beneath the surface and there it stays: Henrietta, Gustav's daughter, behaves in an exemplary manner, making the best of her sadly mistaken marriages, surviving financial and personal tragedy, suffering the betrayal of friends and retainers, saving what she can, including grandson Julius, and defending herself admirably from his criticism as she settles at 'Perry's Ridge' under a clear Home Counties sky. 'Nothing lasts like courage'; Henrietta with her scrap books and heirlooms has plenty left to spare.

The taunting image of 'a brightness elsewhere' is the dream which torments the two male characters of **Figures of Enchantment** and allows neither any rest. Gamboa, a clerk, imagines that money is the passport to this 'place'. A desperate Mr Small, he dreams of wealth with the passion of Raskolnikov but far from leading to promotion his anxious zeal is overlooked and all dreams are shattered when he is arrested in a political demonstration and unceremoniously dumped on a desert island where money is no currency at all. His fate is strangely linked with that of

Frederico, his daughter's boyfriend of whom he thoroughly disapproved. Frederico's fate is controlled by a charm which takes him on an extravagant odyssey which 'with almost a perversely deliberate malevolence had given him not the life he sought but a parody of it that was vile and farcical.' Gamboa and Frederico meet again on the island where the possibilities of a fairy-tale ending for them hang enticingly just beyond their grasp. This is a philosophical, poetic novel in which endurance raises itself as the quality that counts in a life where dreams, expectations, even the quest for knowledge, are revealed as mere stratagems to distract us from infinite despair.

Zorn is an outsider, born on the Baltic; a fair-skinned, white-haired Jew, even when interned with other 'undesirables' in Hitler's Germany, he doesn't quite fit in. Fleeing to England, losing wife and family on the way, he sets up as a handyman on the edge of a village and it is in the details of his craftsmanship, the building of a strange and towering sculpture, that Jones's writing comes alive. The sculpture is partly his downfall: to be different is dangerous and when opportunity presents itself the village pounces, destroying Zorn and everything he built. □

A lighted window

Alison Hennegan

Helen Waddell: A Biography

D. FELICITAS CORRIGAN *Gollancz* £16.95

IN JUST UNDER a decade, from 1927 to 1936, Helen Waddell poured out her love for mediaeval Europe's schoolmen, saints and vagabond poets and offered the staggering but lightly worn learning which she'd garnered steadily since she was twelve. Here, in *The Wandering Scholars*, *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics*, *Peter Abelard* and *The Desert Fathers*, was a series of heart-moving works — histories, translations, a novel — which scholars read with profit, stylists with pleasure and 'ordinary people' with ease and the exhilaration brought by the revelation of an unknown world illumined by the author's passion and made gloriously alive.

Hers was the ideal subject matter for a woman who held so many conflicts in fruitful equilibrium. She was a Home Rule, Belfast Protestant who couldn't live without the Catholic liturgy and mediaeval theology and took much of her own sense of Irishness from those centuries when Ireland's scholars, poets and musicians had been the envy of Europe and chief stewards of its learning. A childhood spent in Japan, as the daughter of a remarkably open-minded Presbyterian missionary, had given her a love of difference and a friendly reverence for strange gods which made it easy for her to accept the blithe heresy of the mediaeval writers who honoured Christ and St

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Basil Blackwell

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Venus. Her sense of vocation was strong: it called her to scholarship not the cloister but imposed upon her the same demand of singleness (marriage she always said she wanted but took care never to accept).

Taxing theological debate braced her. The nature of the Godhead, of divine justice and mercy, preoccupied her. Christ, as God made flesh, fully human, fully suffering, anguished and exalted her. She responded passionately to the natural world and to that loving celebration of its birds and beasts, studied in wonder, recorded in delight, which is Ireland's particular contribution to mediaeval Europe's art and literature.

Mediaevalists – Haskins, Powicke and Lot among them – acknowledged her books as ground-breaking 'firsts', drawn entirely from original sources (there were no secondary ones yet); universities around the world honoured her with degrees and London's grandest hostesses vied for her but her head was not turned.

She was 38 when *The Wandering Scholars* was published. The interruptions had been legion. Her twenties, which should have taken her to Oxford and research, were spent nursing a once loved stepmother whom alcoholism made unrecognisable in her cruelty and squalor. Billy, the best loved of eight brothers, battled against morphia addiction. An academic career begun ten years 'too late' was thwarted constantly by the overt anti-feminism of men who called themselves close friends but used their professorial status to exclude women – 'on principle' – from

academic posts. ('Girls? What are girls?' said one of the Waddells' old Japanese servants and for both Helen and her biographer the theme recurs.)

Yet, as Helen herself so often said: 'The things I've raged over... are the things I thank God for now.' Whether she would have said that of her last years we cannot know. When she died in 1965 she had written nothing of note for almost two decades. Her silence is generally explained in vague and disquieting terms. 'Premature senility', say those who favour materialist answers. Others, including Dame Felicitas, see it rather as a dark night of the soul, with physical collapse as the means to a divinely appointed end.

But there is, perhaps, a middle way. Effortlessly witty, exuberantly joyful though Helen Waddell so often was, she was also much perplexed by pain and suffering. Her own 'wonderful decade' closed with Hitler's rise. The coming war killed her two dearly loved nephews. Its end brought Hiroshima and the appalling testimony of the Camps. In 1938 Helen could compare Hitler with Alaric and Attila, truly terrible but vanquishable by time. Seven years later what had been lost and what had been revealed made that strangely reassuring continuity of surviveable horror less convincing. Helen shared with Milton, whom she almost loved but mainly hated, a terror of betraying 'that one talent which is death to hide'. But her talent lay in the illumination of a world now not only past but lost, it seemed, irrevocably. Enough to silence anyone. □

individual doctors, nurses and clinicians struggling for Hippocratic decency, and for emergency budgets. And the coping-with by gay community(ies).

We have been incredulous at seeming so specifically 'targeted' – that so mortal a disease should have appeared to seek us out. Some, as Altman describes, can't shake off the intuition that homosexuals were singled out in America for some CIA/Defense Department biological warfare test. I heard rumours in '82 that Greenwich Village had been used (who will notice what happens among the freaks?) for illicit experimentation on unknowing civilians which got horrendously out of control. Altman: 'I frankly doubt any of these explanations, but one cannot totally dismiss their plausibility.'

Yet by '82 Aids researchers already suspected an African connection or equivalence. It's now feared that by far the highest incidence, scarcely documented, may be in mid-Africa where transmission is presumed to be primarily via heterosexual acts. Certainly there is no full-blown Western-style urban gay culture there. Caring people are now trying to speak and warn of *acts*, sexual or otherwise, which put the self and others at risk of the virus, rather than of wholesale *populations*, viz 'Haitian immigrants', 'the gays', where the overtones barely a year ago were of another Blood Libel, a shuddering away as from 'the Jews'.

Haemophiliacs infected by blood products before the Aids viral risk was known, Blacks shocked in New York, identified heterosexual-transmission cases, the coping occupations, knew what it is to be 'libelled' too: they had or were proximate to the 'gay disease'. I remember my own horror when I caught myself, at about the time the British press reached its Aids scare climax in February last year, registering an involuntary reflex 'pleasure' when reading of an apparent case of heterosexual transmission of HTLV-III. For an instant there was relief, as if the gay experience were being rejoined to humanity's at large.

Women reading rape headlines, Asians reading arson headlines, appreciate in circumstances where even the white gay male commonly doesn't, the terror, all individuality destroyed, of the 'hunt' being up. 'The central dilemma in thinking about Aids,' writes Altman, 'is that while it is medical nonsense to think of it as a "gay disease", it is the gay experience of Aids, rather than, say, that of drug users, haemophiliacs or Zairians, that has shaped the perceptions and the politics of the epidemic.' This may change – it has of course been modified – but it is the wholly justified context of his account.

Altman is Australian, much-travelled, presently a lecturer in Melbourne, and dear to gays inquisitive about the modern movement for his *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* of 1971, one of the basic texts. This is the analysis so far of how Aids 'worked on' America – the political, the medical and the gay communities. *Aids the Deadly Epidemic* is a warning rocket for the uninstructed. In June we can look forward to Peter Tatchell's *Aids: A Guide to Survival* (GMP), on alternative therapies for bolstering the immune system. □

When the bell tolls

Andrew Lumsden

Aids and the New Puritanism

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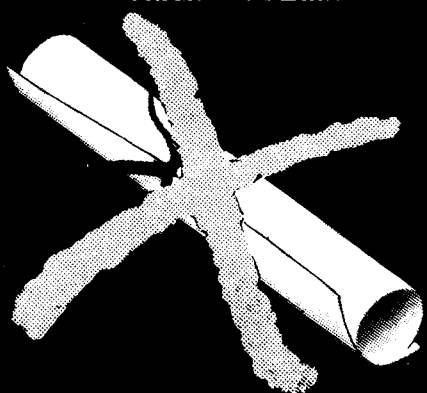
JUST A BUG. 'Perhaps the most difficult thing to accept about Aids,' says Dennis Altman in a bleak moment of reflection, 'is that it is, in human terms, without meaning.' There is only the coping with, and the taking advantage of. Everybody knows about the taking advantage of Aids: the racist reactions to the disproportionate appearance of Haitians among Aids cases in New York, the Fundamentalists, media and 'street' slurs as a result of the male homosexual cases, tilted over on to lesbians too.

It's the coping-with that reflects so well on afflicted humanity. Not the coping by elected governments anywhere, unless in San Francisco – certainly not by successive British ministers of health 1981-86, as witness Hayhoe's exclusion of the gay press from his press conference of this 13 March. No, the coping rather by so many persons with Aids (PWAs), to whom Altman pays tribute: and by

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Shorter reviews

Nunca Más (Never Again) A Report by Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People Faber/Index on Censorship £14.95 & £7.95

The report — detailed, lucid, responsible, unwavering throughout — notes that the horrors therein are only a selection from accounts by some of the few who survived the military's attempt to exterminate opposition. The preface by Ernesto Sabato, commission chairman, is a pearl of liberal ethics applied. His antepenultimate paragraph should be in the standing orders of everyone who has sworn to defend the State. The translation and presentation are excellent. The whole is a scream made cogent.

Yet its great lack is suggested by the first two sentences of the body of the report. 'Many of the events in this report will be hard to believe. This is because the men and women of our nation have only heard of such horror in reports from distant places.' Indeed, too few Argentines acknowledge the profound and abiding violence and disrespect in their stratified society. The atrocities of the 1967-83 regime differ neither in quality nor degree from the slaughter of indigenous people that facilitated the expansion of Argentina, the hunting of Jews and libertarians during the Tragic Week of 1919, the killing by squalor in the shanties of yesterday and today.

This is a report that doesn't go far enough, about hellhounds who may be deemed to have gone too far in that they flayed indiscriminately among the articulate bourgeoisie. What if they had hurled into their pit of directed sadism *only* those who could be shown to be in the left-wing *guerrilla*, as they briefly did at first? What report then?

The commission's recommendations are correct, calling for protective legislation, due process in the courts, the teaching of defence of human rights 'in all state educational establishments'. The private schools and patriarchal families where the Argentine *gente decente* learns the illiberality that breeds and tolerates devouring psychopathy are not mentioned.

Robert del Quiaro

How Nuclear Weapons Decisions are Made

ed. SCILLA McCLEAN Macmillan £25 & £6.95

The Oxford Research Group, a collaborative enterprise bringing together concerned citizens and academic specialists, has produced a valuable guide to the institutional framework of nuclear weapons policy in all five self-confessed nuclear states (borderline cases such as Israel are not discussed). Here is detailed confirmation of what many people argue: that public political process, even in the 'free world', has never had more than a belated and enfeebled grip on the dynamics of nuclear escalation, whose origins lie in the network of formal and informal links between military-industrial interests, representatives of the 'civil' nuclear industry and permanent government bureaucracies.

This is a book to refer to rather than to read. Its dispassionate tone, its thickets of acronyms, may make its subject seem banal. But this, we are left in no doubt, is the banality of evil, which now encircles the globe.

M. H. Ryle

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MUSIC

Young, gifted and irreverent

Charles Fox

Some new directions for British jazz were signposted at this year's Camden Jazz Week



IMAGINE THE REACTIONS of a jazz buff separated from the music for a couple of decades — scratching a living in a far-flung part, or maybe simply doing porridge — whose return to civilisation coincided with Camden Jazz Week. What would amaze him or her most? The evening devoted to women musicians? Seeing a quintet of British-born Black players? Both events would be unexpected, yet nothing like as startling as happening upon a big band made up of musicians who revel in being jokey, whose notion of a successful performance involves trekking up and down the aisles, who specialise in sounding irreverent and ironic as well as accomplished.

Loose Tubes is all those things, rejecting the solemnity that jazz became prone to once the players realised they might be artists. The scores, mostly by Django Bates (he handles the synthesisers as well) and the bassist Steve Berry, are as intricate and imaginative as any outside of Gil Evans or George Russell. The soloists, young and enthusiastic, dazzle (Iain Ballamy was in especially good fettle on soprano saxophone). And the brass section bites as fiercely as one of Woody Herman's better herds. But the same musicians, all 21 of them standing in a half-circle, also go in for visual jokes. A spotlight falls on the trumpeters as they freeze, their pose caricaturing pre-war publicity photos of the Ellington or Jimmie Lunceford bands.

Technical bravura was not quite so evident, alas, in the brass playing of **Gale Force 17**, the

women's big band. But the rhythm section, borrowed intact from The Guest Stars, a regular all-women group, coped tidily and there were confident solos from most of the saxophonists — notably Kathy Stobart, something of a veteran, playing baritone, and Louise Elliott, an Australian tenor player wearing an Anthony Eden hat. Annie Whitehead blew a gutsy trombone solo in the impromptu blues at the end, but elsewhere sounded a trifle sedate. Part of the trouble may have been unadventurous scores by Sharon Freeman, deputising as composer and conductor for Melba Liston, too ill to make the journey from America.

A transatlantic comparison, however, worked to the disadvantage of Jan Ponsford's **Vocal Chords**, an a cappella group that started off the women's evening. Just over a fortnight earlier the Camden Festival proper had begun — once again at the Shaw Theatre — with **Sweet Honey In The Rock**, a superb all-women quintet from Washington DC. Their sudden shifts of harmony were responsible for at least this reviewer experiencing a frisson up the spine. Individual singers, especially Bernice Reagon, the group's founder and leader, came across with the emotional power of major jazz players. Classic gospel numbers were tightly clenched; political, including feminist, 'originals' came across as sharp and witty. Which made the Vocal Chords, with their predictable voicings and jests about washing-up liquid, sound not so much committed as amateurish.

Being Black, of course, is not the answer. Indeed, being Black in Britain has tended to cut musicians off from playing jazz. Earlier performers such as the saxophonists Joe Harriott, from the West Indies, or Dudu Pukwana, from South Africa, arrived playing jazz already. Young Blacks born here have grown up listening to funk and reggae. Yet quite a few of the musicians now want to sharpen their talents upon something more challenging.

Such a musician is **Courtney Pine**, a tenor saxophonist with a natural air of authority, a hinting at stature to come. In his quintet he is partnered by a singer Cleveland Watkins, a disciple of Bobby McFerrin; at his best when aiming at bizarre effects, becoming distinctly boring, just like Ella Fitzgerald and Betty Carter — and McFerrin, when he unleashes chorus after chorus of scat syllables. The drummer, Mark Mondesir, has a nice ear for style. This is, in fact, a group that has discovered a technical inheritance. The next year or two should see them — and Pine in particular — deploying that knowledge more and more individually.

COURTNEY PINE and four other young Black musicians joined forces with **Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers** on the Friday night. They played a couple of numbers together, one of which, *Wheel Within a Wheel*, revealed the quality of Philip Bent, a flautist (his entry — splendidly poised — told it all). This was part of a second half in which the Messengers also played behind a couple of dance groups and — in *Lester Left Town* — backed up a stab at vocalese by the 'jazz-rap poet', Jalal. It was a happier, much more relaxed set of performances than the musicians had given in the first half, where too many horn players got stuck in technical routines (worst of all was the newly acquired trombonist). Donald Harrison seemed to keep blowing the same alto solo, full of piercing notes, inevitably lifting off into the upper register. But it was a delight — and part of the Messengers' tradition — to have the themes stated so briskly and bountifully.

Art Blakey, of course, remains one of the great jazz drummers. Another is **Elvin Jones**, who appeared on a couple of evenings with three non-Americans: two Englishmen, **Dave Holland** and **John Surman**, and the German trombonist, **Albert Mangelsdorff**, a quartet that provided the week's most satisfying music.

These were four virtuosos yet none showed off, none confused substance with instrumental wizardry. Dave Holland, for instance, almost deliberately eschewed the spectacular approach so many bassists go in for nowadays. The sound these musicians made was paramount — especially Mangelsdorff, able to conjure up chords on his trombone, and Surman, as fulsome on baritone in *Prelude To A Kiss* as his hero Harry Carney, or piping woodnotes wild on soprano in *Vedanta*. Best of all was the interplay between baritone, light and secretive, and petulant trombone in *Going*, a kind of up-dating of *The Train And The River*, as bucolic as it was fanciful, demonstrating that a sense of identity is what jazz is really about. □

THEATRE

Musical chairs

Benedict Nightingale

Café Puccini

ROBIN RAY *Wyndhams*

After Aida

JULIAN MITCHELL *Old Vic*

HOW TO COMMUNICATE an enthusiasm for a composer's work, plus some idea of their history and character? That's an endeavour less suited to the theatre than to television, as the musical biographies of Ken Russell, exotically mannered though they become, surely tended to prove. Nevertheless, the stage has produced two examples of the genre within as many weeks: the less successful about the oily author of *Madame Butterfly*, the less unsuccessful about the grim old maestro whose name the jealous Puccini could scarcely bear to hear, even when (a touch indicative of the level of Robin Ray's invention) punningly invoked by a label on a bottle: Vinho Verde.

Where to set such a show? It can't be too specific, or the author will spend the evening implausibly explaining why mothers, wives, agents and enemies are congregating in this artistic salon or that producer's office. It can't be too abstract, or we won't know whether we're in the 19th-century AD, Olympus or limbo.

The solution at Wyndham's is to present us with a clutter of tables, chairs, hampers, staircases and musicians improbably claiming to be, in the evening's title, the **Café Puccini**. This is where the morose composer arrives for a celebration that isn't my idea of a celebration at all, consisting as it initially does of Puccini narrating his life-story for the benefit of singing waiters and other melodious factota from the kitchen and cash-desk.

But then more historically authentic figures materialise, as the café staff begins to double, treble, quadruple its role. On trundles Puccini's ma to fuss about his smoking habits ('how many a day is it?'), followed by his mistress, Elvira Bonturi, who opines that he is 'like clear water in the cage of a bird'. The evening turns out to be concerned partly with the composer's professional ups and downs, partly with the deterioration of this latest relationship. He became an habitual philanderer, she a frustrated scold, their one-time love a long, savage war that ended by claiming an innocent victim: a 16-year-old maid who swallowed poison and died in agony after being unjustly accused by Elvira of an affair with Puccini.

That story gives the evening a momentary frisson, and so does the appearance of Toscanini, who admired the composer's minims but had his number. Not only was he a supporter of 'the pig Mussolini', he was 'a vain, stupid man with his badly dyed hair — an old goat, running after anything in a skirt'.

Unluckily, neither Ray's script nor Lewis Fiander's fastidious acting convinced me that overall he was a lot more interesting than that; and the snippets from his operas, inadequately sung as they mostly are, didn't send me out in search of a Covent Garden brochure.

AFTER AIDA is set in a theatre apparently recovering from a joint attack by time, vandals and a symbolically-minded designer — why else that chaotic pile of dismembered seats in the middle of its stalls? The supporting characters aren't meant to be waiters, but their cute little white jackets and bow-ties give them the even more inexplicable appearance of stewards on an ocean liner. Nor do they double as singers. That task is wisely left to members of the Welsh National Opera, who sit slumped in theatre seats reading newspapers or knitting or picking their noses, then come forward to launch very capably into whatever of Verdi's numbers the script gives them an excuse to sing.

Meanwhile, Verdi himself lumbers about the stage in the person of Richard Griffiths, an actor who manages here to sound like a grumpy bear and, as always, look a bit like one too: part grizzly, part polar. One would say he gives new meaning to the word 'overbearing' were it not that his face also suggests that a wild boar somehow, somewhere, slipped into his family tree.

It's a format as eccentric as that for *Café Puccini*, and no more convincing for the

roughhouse farce it's occasionally asked to embrace. Why must the librettist Boito, in Ian Charleson's performance a puckish lad from Glasgow, caper through the stalls in his anxiety to avoid meeting Verdi, then be carried to him by a white-bibbed conductor and a white-bibbed publisher? Yet the evening's principal begetter is Julian Mitchell, author of *Another Country* and an accomplished dramatist.

He gives shape to the oddball proceedings by concentrating on a particular period of Verdi's career, the end of the nine years he spent moping unproductively on his farm after the opening of *Aida*.

That permits him to stage conversations which informatively range here and there, telling us (for instance) about Verdi's sober love-life and sombre world-view: 'I believe life is completely pointless, but while I'm in it I much prefer good to evil, light to darkness.' More dramatically, it allows him to show the composer being dramatically lured, hooked, then played by family and friends determined he should end his exile, return to the theatre, and write what the world now treasures as *Otello*.

Myself, I'll remember the moment when the old bear orders the incredulous Boito to rewrite his libretto so that the Moor suddenly abandons his jealous tantrums and marches off with a cry of 'follow me' to defeat the Turks, who have miraculously turned out to be undrowned.

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The Girl in the Picture (15)

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HAIL, CALEDONIA? After all, Paddy Higson — closely associated with Bill Forsyth on three of his films — is billed as producer; gangling, half-fly, half-bashful John Gordon-Sinclair of *Gregory's Girl* stars; and there are other Forsyth local heroes, notably the versatile Rikki Fulton in a cameo as a church minister, to lend support. Why, then, should one leave **The Girl in the Picture**, written and directed by American-born but Scotland-based Cary Parker as his first feature, feeling so chopfallen?

The question answers itself. As *Restless Natives*, also produced by Paddy Higson, demonstrated only last year, the Forsyth touch is unique and a devilish sight more subtle, more rich and devious than might appear. He weaves a much thicker context, knotting in dozens of seemingly casual visual gags, bringing his threads together into an unanticipated final pattern, than your journeyman webster. He is pawky where others are poky.

Given its essential dilution, and 90-odd minutes with nothing better to do, Parker's douce little movie has in fact some attractive moments. Sinclair plays Alan, a young photographer working at the Smile Please Studios in Glasgow's West End and rehearsing with his amiable boss (bothered by a pot plant that refuses to flourish) how he is painlessly to break off with his live-in girlfriend Mary (wannish Irina Brook). In the event, to his ill-concealed discomfiture, it is she who moves out, unbidden. Alan's prepared phrases about room to 'maximise our potentials' echo hollowly back at him as he beds more than he can satisfy in the person of a

pot-smoking bohemian lass he has snapped: 'Do you mind if I call you Jimmy?' she asks and he does, rather. A mystery woman he has glimpsed throughout and finally sits near to in a posh cocktail lounge proves to be trade — 'You looking for a girl?', offers the barman confidingly: our Alan (with traces of romantic Gregory still inhabiting him) isn't and politely departs, towards the inevitable happy ending.

Interspersed through this Alan-Mary on-off-on affair — 'I really think that I do probably definitely love you,' he manages — are a couple of subsidiary running matters. Chubby wee co-worker Ken (David McKay) falls for another young female client from afar and earnestly waves sophistry at chum Alan to prove that her 'not if you were the last man on

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Clockwise Zany any-road movie début by prime farceur Michael Frayn, writing time-obsessed comprehensive head John Cleese into calamity-strewn race to Norwich conference, driven in dad's car — and out of and into his wits — by truant girl pupil, towards higher-lunacy finale. (Sharon Maiden, Alison Steadman).

Dreamchild Carroll-Dodgson's Alices — fictions, fantasy and fact — collide in scintillating cinema first for Gavin Millar, polishing every facet of original Dennis Potter script. Old Mrs Hargreaves, née Liddell (superb Coral Browne), has bad, lyric, macabre 1932 centenary NY trip, memory's whirligig halting on late-learned love (Ian Holm, Amelia Shankley).

Defence of the Realm Fumes of menace rise from David Drury's corrosive if erratic political chiller, written by Martin Stellman, reflecting current home-based concerns. Hoodwinked into disgracing awkward MP, tabloid reporter redemptively opens can of worms as Special Branch hovers (Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliott, Greta Scacchi).

earth' put-down affords loopholes for hope. Even Ken is to get his darkroom chance with a brisk bridesmaid — the one girleen right out of Forsyth — as late compensation: 'bridesmaid' because elsewhere in the film (plot would be too strong a word) shakily engaged Bill (Gregor Fisher) and Annie (Caroline Guthrie) move towards a white wedding. It's during the run-up to this that Rikki Fulton has grabbed his baffled, unctuous instant, asking the bemused pair, 'What sort of commitment would you like to make?' while fighting to recall their names. Alas, there are simply not enough such mickles to make a muckle: all's too gentle, random, aspiring. On the evidence to date, Glasgae belongs to Forsyth.

OPERA

One or t'other

Andrew Clements

Parsifal*Coliseum***Der fliegende Holländer***Covent Garden*

UNFLAWED WAGNER productions are increasingly hard to find in Britain. They are not everyday occurrences even on the Continent, but British opera houses seem to reserve a special brand of obtuseness for Wagner, nearly always managing to arrange things so that at least one element in the musico-dramatic mix sours the rest. The new stagings at the Coliseum and Covent Garden complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. Where the musical performances are the acceptable aspect of *Parsifal*, in *Holländer* the staging, by Mike Ashman and David Fielding, is the main point of interest.

Paradoxically, though, **Parsifal** provided the more disappointing evening, if only because it promised so much. Joachim Herz has done a number of first-rate stagings for English National Opera, while Reginald Goodall's consummate *Parsifal* conducting is already enshrined in the recording of the Welsh National production that was released by EMI last year. That combination, in the first English-language *Parsifal* in this country for 60 years, inevitably generated very high expectations that, in my experience, were only very partially fulfilled. It is visually and dramatically an unredeemed disaster, viscerally ugly to behold and offering no perceptions whatsoever upon one of the richest of all operatic subjects. The big set pieces are handled without flair or discipline; the main protagonists are left to assemble their own characterisations. Dramatic points are often cast aside or de-emphasised, stage effects — the aerial dodgem car for Klingsor, the garish, encumbering corolla for the Flowermaidens — combine extravagance with ineffectiveness.

Certainly the production was hobbled on its

opening night by the illness of Warren Ellsworth, who was to have sung the title role, and his very late replacement by Siegfried Jerusalem, who had to rely on his native stagecraft to get him through the evening and who sang in German throughout. But Jerusalem was a joy to hear, and to watch, for his acting offered an unforced naturalism that his specially schooled colleagues on stage had discarded. Both Gwynne Howell's smoothly sung Gurnemanz and Anne Evans's controlled, assured Kundry eschewed any hint of histrionics; Rodney Macann's Klingsor was severely curtailed by his flying chariot, Neil Howlett as Amfortas managed to remain credible despite his Hammer Horror appearance. The chorus sounded as ill at ease as it looked, though later performances might well tighten up those aspects of the production. Goodall, meanwhile, was Goodall: slow to catch fire in the first act (Gurnemanz's narration did not hold the attention as it should) and only really taking a hold of the drama at the beginning of the second scene, but thereafter never allowing his grip to slacken; a bit unyielding in the flower maidens' music perhaps, but keeping the third act on course from the numbed, withdrawn prelude onwards, allowing Wagner's 'sonorous image-cluster', as Robin Holloway calls it in his essay in the Royal Opera/ENO Guide to *Parsifal* (a recent meaty volume, superb value for £3), to carry the drama where the stage action signally failed.

Ashman's *Holländer* gets off to an exciting if squally overture, conducted by Gerd Albrecht as if he wanted to cut the opera down to two hours. Thereafter the excitement comes and goes, while the singers make a fitful account of themselves. Most consistent is Robert Lloyd's avuncular Daland; Simon Estes's Dutchman favours beauty of tone over any kind of dramatic bite; Rosalind Plowright (Senta) shows only occasional flashes of the kind of intensity and vocal strength her role requires.

The staging works, by and large. Daland captains a submarine that presumably has sunk the Dutchman; the spinning song is transferred to a women's labour camp where cables are being made; the crucial confrontation between Senta and Erik takes place in an unadorned room, with sliding panels offering her the temporary illusion of escape. Only the ending of the work is badly fudged. Predictably the producer was vociferously booed, while equally predictably the singers were cheered to the echo; one wonders whether the Covent Garden claque would recognise an intelligent attempt at staging opera if it got up and kicked them in the teeth. □

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ONE OF THE MOST confusing words in the general arts vocabulary is 'festival'. What does it mean, beyond suggesting a general glow of wellbeing?

In practice, it can mean almost anything, from a street party to a high-art exercise, as the circulars now beginning to come in show. Brighton Festival, Commonwealth Arts Festival, York Festival of Early Music, Mayfest. . . What, if anything, do they have in common? And how does one measure their success?

The East End Festival (or TEEF), its eighth manifestation just over, is an easy one to pin down. For a start, its aims are straightforward: to be, say its organisers, 'a celebration of local talent'.

Its 130 events in 45 different venues around Tower Hamlets have featured local work for local people, and a third of that has been by Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean artists. Indeed, around half of TEEF's £15,000 budget was parcelled out as grants to local venues and groups wanting to put on work for the festival.

Camden Festival, on the other hand — running more or less simultaneously, but with a budget of £131,000 — foxes me. No, said its new 23-year-old administrator, Dick Witts, firmly, they did not regard it as a community festival.

'We're rather aggressive about the term "community"'. It's seen as a middle-class term for working-class culture.' Camden's community-based events (a minor section) are called 'street level' instead. 'Festivals,' said Witts approvingly, 'are one of the few enclosed forms we have left in arts promotion.' He presumably means that a certain kind of concentration or focus is possible. (Cheltenham, for instance, managed to explore different aspects of political censorship in a recent Literature Festival.)

But Camden's focus wasn't nearly so clear. Like TEEF, it has been a widely scattered festival, ranging over theatres, churches and public buildings in the borough. And although in theory the theme of Imperialism was the unifying factor (linking, for instance, John Cage's 'Apartment House 1776', the Amati Ensemble's programme and London Pro Musica's compilation of works about New Worlds), it had to be taken with a pinch of salt. The Orchestra of Lights and West Hampstead Symphony Orchestra, for a start, didn't contribute much towards that theme.

It hasn't been music alone, either; although its roots were as a music festival. It's expanded to a 'street level' festival, a welcome Young Festival and (as before) an international festival. There is no doubt that, within that very broad ambit, Camden lined up some

challenging work. The Second Stride Dance Company brought their new 'Bösendorfer Dances'; a rare Kurt Weill opera received critical acclaim; the intelligent Music in Historic Buildings devised some neat pairings (though a court injunction stopped one of the neatest: John Cage in the glass block of Hampstead's Hopkins' House). Certainly all the events I attended (picked to get a representative spread of the festival) were strongly attended by obvious supporters.

So why was I vaguely concerned? Paradoxical as it may sound, the events' very success raised questions. To a large extent, each event seemed to cater for well-organised arts constituencies. The experimental dance world turned out enthusiastically for Second Stride. Audiences for Surnai, the Rajasthani musicians, were largely Indian. The folk night organised by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (rare musicians in a setting that tried too hard for informality) predictably brought in folkies. The children's events speak for themselves.

This alone is hardly a legitimate source of concern. After all, tastes are made up of minorities and sensible arts programming caters to that. But the strength of festivals is the way in which, at their best, they can also encourage people to take day trips across the boundaries of disciplines, as well as bringing in new audiences. Part of that is achieved by the way in which events are sited. Glasgow's Mayfest last year, for instance, took theatre groups into the community halls of outlying housing 'schemes' and, before that, community work into the city centre. The result was a measure of cross-fertilisation, one of the aims indeed of Camden's Dick Witts. 'Compartmentalisation,' he said, 'has been one of the blocks of British creativity, which is why music theatre is in such a bad state in Britain. Musicians and theatres won't cross over. Cross-fertilisation is what we're after.'

Camden's Festival — however excellent its parts — gives little sign this year of achieving such a goal. Without a central focus, it was hard to find a sense of cohesiveness. Added to that was the problem of any inner-London arts festival automatically in competition with the day-to-day arts events available in central London, from Festival Hall to ICA. What can it do that borough inhabitants can't get from other sources the rest of the year round?

It is a problem that Witts acknowledges. That is the reason why he sees the 'projects' as being a particular area of development next year. This year Kurtis Blow, 'King of Rap', worked with local Black arts groups and Art Blakey is working with young local jazz musicians.

A link-up has been encouraged between a local cinema and the Filmmakers Co-Op. Camden Festival in the past, said Witts, has been too much a festival for 'trainspotters': it's been the place for connoisseurs to catch up with rare musical works. His instinct to broaden what could be regarded as currently a collection of coteries is a sound one, and potentially better value for Camden. At present its festival draws — as far as rough figures show — only 30 per cent of its audience from Camden, 70 per cent from outside. There is surely work to be done on that. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Stoogecraft

I SUPPOSE there is someone somewhere who thinks that Joan Rivers is the epitome of sophistication and chic, a glamorous and amusing performer. Perhaps it is the BBC? Perhaps it is Joan's friend Nancy Reagan? Perhaps it is Orville, the sick-green glove-puppet?

One person it definitely isn't is Peter Cook, currently appearing as co-host on Joan's chatshow **Can We Talk** (BBC2), which recently established itself as the runaway flop of the season. What is he doing there?

Well, it's clearly some kind of perversion he can do very little about, a connoisseur's weakness for the grotesque. I remember Cook describing the problems of masturbating with *Playboy*. You're just on the point of coming all over relentless images of Tracy or Cindy when the page flips over and you find to your disappointment that you have just mated with the Diner's Club of America. It is the kind of adolescent trauma that could easily tip a man over into a comedian and one can but assume that Joan is playing the part of the Diner's Club in Cook's professional life.

Her chat show is almost as richly grotesque as Cook's own superb anti-contribution to the genre, *Where Do I Sit?*, still fondly remembered as easily the worst thing ever to have appeared on television in the world. How Cook's eye must have lit up when his agent told him there might be a job researching the outer limits of unfunniness in public for money; all he had to do was sit there looking slightly like himself.

'What a beautiful frock you're wearing, Joan,' said Peter, as the crispy-fried Miss Rivers came on looking like an American President's wife. There was no need for him to add, 'I have to say that contractually,' for us to get the point, but why didn't he add that he was being unfunny contractually as well? Running through a special non-humorous version of his life, which must have taken time to come up with, Cook revealed with some relish that he had once turned down the romantic lead opposite Brigitte Bardot because he didn't like the script. He seemed pleased by this. I suppose a delight in the grotesque is the natural escape from a world in which one is liable to wake from a wet dream of Brigitte Bardot to find oneself playing the romantic lead opposite Joan Rivers.

The following week Cook had selflessly eliminated all but the faintest tinge of irony from his stoogecraft, not to upstage the vintage grotesquery on offer. 'If you were going to phone royalty who would you phone?' Joan asked him. There wasn't time for Peter not to be funny here as Nancy Reagan was waiting on the line to be phoned as Joan's royalty. 'Tell me,' said Cook when the crispy-fried 'chat' with Nancy had burnt itself out courtesy of the British tax-payer, 'is she as beautiful in the flesh?'

God knows what sickening interpretation of the word 'flesh' Cook had in mind: it was safe from Joan. 'Oh, absolutely,' she crisped. 'And for my next guest... the amazingly attractive Rupert Everett!!!'

Everett said he had taken eight valium to stop his heart beating before coming on and it showed. His dying was lifelike. The most interesting thing about him was the fact that his shirt was hanging out at the back on purpose: a regular mind-twister. His hair was so crisply casualised to tease forth lost youthfulness — he is only 25 — that he nearly forgot not to run his hand through it when his ser-piece theatre story gradually became tranquillised sometime during its second interval, leaving everyone grey and old-looking. With his anecdote in ruins, he looked like an illustration for the old Sixties grass-paranoia, but for real.

He was covered for by the next exhibit, balloon-person Bernard Manning, making a remark about white people getting together and enjoying themselves for once. Manning is the perfect foil for Rivers' brand of embarrassment. He ignored her completely, his fatness obliging him to face only forward, his brutalised Northern fascism eliciting only pity.

As if to point out to us exactly how her form of America humour refuses to cross the Atlantic intact, Rivers now asked Manning how he rated himself in bed, on a scale for 1-10. It was a delicious moment. Manning, who probably has to use a No. 10 reinforced bed just to get into one, turned to blubber for a moment, then claimed to have a son who owned a bingo hall somewhere in the North, his personal claim for a zero on Joan's scale perhaps?

The show came alive, revealing a void, only when Everett barracked Manning's racist and homophobic jokes and was accused by him of being a public-schoolboy, a rare first-degree insult on television. I think they should all come back every week, especially Manning and Everett and, of course, Peter Cook.

AS IF TO showcase the other side of his talent, Cook hosted **Saturday Live** (C4) last week with a style and invention that might have come from the high days of the Sixties. His President Marcos phoning home collect from Honolulu, his Supermac looking back over a successful career — 'I regard the House of Lords as a stepping stone to Vegas, but I'm not opening for Tony Bennett' — his park-bench importuner — 'Apparently Anita Ekberg has set up this hamburger stall in Rome...' — and his Xanadu building contractor complaining about Kubla's grandiose building plans — 'He wants this sacred river running right through the structure and it's got to exit in a sunless sea...' — were vintage items which will baffle all true Joan Rivers fans, if such a thing exists.

As for chat shows proper, **Aspel & Company** (ITV) is the only grown-up one, really.

Teaming a mini-skirted Boy George with a sun-masked Yoko Ono was sound casting, but it was Yoko's evening. At 52 the woman sizzles like an articulate sky-rocket. Light blue touch-paper and admire. □

Weekend competition

No 2917

Set by May Day

Compers are asked to remedy the generally waffling and unstylish nature of recent party political broadcasts by providing epigrams encapsulating the views of British political parties or their protagonists. Max. five goes by 10 April.

No 2914

Set by E.O. Parrott

Apt, witty anagrams of the names of NS contributors.

Report

By PC 49

Having apprehended and consigned to the shredder all those entries which were observed not adhering to the by-laws (that is to say, behaving in an irrelevant, inapt and distinctly non-witty manner) and having locked up on the spot all villains with previous form (fancy trying to get *God's worried* past me again), I was left with a somewhat small line-up. Having viewed what seemed an unlikely number of *cancel dumb plans* (Duncan Campbell), *keen PR tellers* (Peter Kellner) and *ran news muddles* (Andrew Lumsden), I further removed all those trying to pervert the course of comp. judging by appearing identical. To the following I hereby offer £2 and a caution — we can't go a-printing of all your craven caveats and 'sorry didn't mean it's'.

Stanley J. Sharpless: NS has sly jester pal
Hugo Williams: I'm gush, I allow
Benedict Nightingale: Acting, in the end, bilge
JOYCE JOHNSON

Ms de Meaner: Dares men — me?
PETER NORMAN

Will Bellenger: Nell will be Reg
Roger Woddiss: Weird sod, Rog
Claudia Wright: A rug-laid witch
KATIE MALLETT

Hugh Stephenson: Hush! — gent phones
ALAN CLARK

Stephanie Jordan: Hi, patron! Je danse!
Basil Ransome-Davies: O, 'is verse is mad, banal
WILL BELLENGER

Alan Brien: A bar Lenin
David Edgar: Dead gravid
BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Steven Rose: Overt sense
NIGEL BUNKER

Benedict Nightingale: Enlighten id; begin act.
MARGARET ROGERS

Noel Petty: Teeny plot
JOHN STANLEY

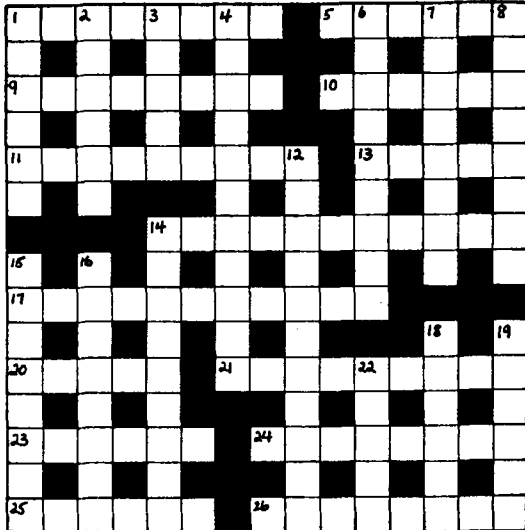
Gerard Benson: NS bore — danger!
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Benedict Nightingale: Bald enticing thingee
AL RUNCIMAN

Fionnuala O'Connor: Lo — an RUC fan. I? O no no!
LISSA EVANS

Weekend Crossword 1513

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Name _____

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ACROSS

- 1 Composer of a play on butchers (8)
- 5 River often seen in bed (6)
- 9 Getting out when about a hundred is thrilling (8)
- 10 Steal and put back into sleep (6)
- 11 Bridge supporters would remain if the final were lost, as these columns indicate (9)
- 13 Noblemen make precious things lose their heads (5)
- 14 Possibly she is a feminist cricketer? (5,6)
- 17 Love remedies may be found in the press cooked up by those who minister to lust (11)
- 20 Referred to in an anthracite depot (5)
- 21 Plant a weapon where money is made (9)
- 23 Fruit keeps a girl within call (6)
- 24 Hurrying to compose a poem about a backwater? (8)
- 25 Possibly run and see to make certain (6)
- 26 Ten-year wanderings? (8)

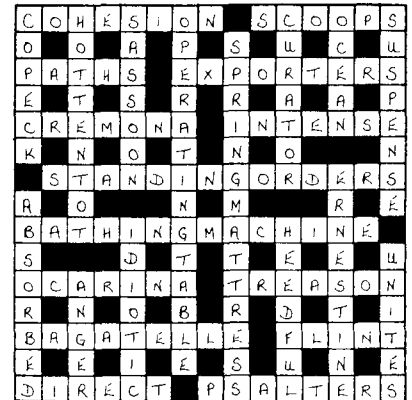
DOWN

- 1 Phrase wrongly used by a mountain-dweller (6)
- 2 Behave badly at a meeting, giving hell to the French (6)
- 3 Actor shows restraint (5)
- 4 Cowboys have additional clauses about annoyance (11)
- 6 They go slowly but may make the loser tire (9)
- 7 The river has to turn and hurry (8)
- 8 It makes a pig snore terribly when taking a rest (8)

- 12 Shunned and, when penniless, dies in obscurity on the grassy plain (11)
- 14 The paper would be inferior if it lost the right (9)
- 15 Circle on a greater one (8)
- 16 Home losers are not such enthusiastic supporters (8)
- 18 The parson has to cease being without wine (6)
- 19 Periods in which John, for example, loses his youth (6)
- 22 Needed when fishing for river fish (5)

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CHESS

HERE WE RUN into the standard snag for a weekly — what to say about something in progress that will have finished by the time the words get to the reader. The event in question is the GLC International. Although I cannot safely say who is going to win this, it was already clear from the early rounds that Murray Chandler was set on making a serious attempt to improve on his second place finish in the 1984 London tournament. He might have snatched first place from Karpov two years ago, if he had not persisted in a costly policy of meeting 1. d4 with the Tarrasch Defence. Since then Murray has overhauled his opening repertoire. In fact, being one of the most hard-working GMs, this is something that he is doing more or less constantly.

However well one prepares, though, playing for a win with Black will involve incurring some risks. There were certainly chances for both sides in this game against one of America's most promising players:

Diugy-Chandler, GLC
International 1986. Queen's

Indian.

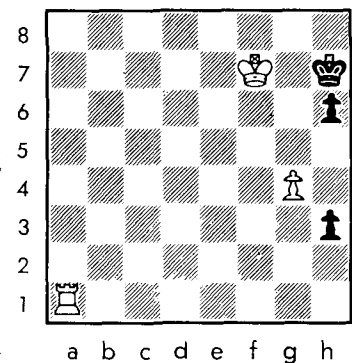
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. g3 Ba6 5. Qa4 c6 6. Nc3 d5 7. exd5 exd5 8. Bg2 Bd6 9. Bg5 0-0 10. Ne5 b5 11. Qc2 b4 At this stage Black's position looks alarmingly ragged. But at least he has active play. 12. Na4 Re8 13. Nd3 h6 14. Bd2 White thinks that occupation of c5 will secure an advantage, but the last two moves are suspiciously retrograde. Bb5 15. Nac5 Bxc5 16. dxc5 Na6 17. Bf3 Ne4 18. 0-0 Bxd3 19. exd3 Nxd2 20. Qxd2 Nxc5 So Black has won that pawn. But won't White be able to take revenge on the weakness at c6? 21. Rfc1 Qb6 22. Qc2 Nd7 Well, why not now 23. Qxc6? The obvious rejoinder is 23... Qxc6 24. Rxc6 Ne5 with a fork. But this can be met by 25. Bxd5! 23. d4?! Qxd4 24. Qxc6 Nb6 25. b3 Rac8 26. Qb7 Rc3 27. Rd1 Qf6 28. Bxd5 Re2? Black still stands very well after this move, but Dlugy must have heaved a sigh of relief. 28... Re7! wins a piece at once. 29. Bg2 Rcc2 30. Rf1 Rxf2 31. Be4 Qd4! 32. Bxc2 Rxf1 + 33. Kxf1 Qxa1 34. Kg2 Qe5 35. Qxa7 Qe2 + 36. Kg1 Qe3 + 37. Kg2 Qe2 + Symptoms of time-trouble. 38. Kg1 Qe3 + 39. Kg2 g5 40. Qb8 + Kg7 41. Qd6 Qe2 + 42. Kg1 Qxc2 43. Qxb6 Qb1 + 44. Kg2 Qxa2 + 45. Kh3 Qxb3 46. Qd4 +

Kg8 0-1.

Far from a masterpiece — just a good hard fight! When writing about the game active players are perhaps prone to forget just how fallible they are themselves in practice. Stewart Reuben, the director of the GLC International, is able to judge these matters with the acute eye of a participant observer, being both a useful player and a GM amongst tournament organizers. It was clever of him to find an unfilled niche in what one might have thought of as overpopulated territory — books on the openings. His recently published *Chess Openings — Your Choice!* (Pergamon) seems a remarkably useful and unfussy aid to the inexperienced. It does not pretend to go very deeply into any variations. But it sets out all the main lines that anybody would need to know in order to start working out a repertoire, and the assessments are always reasonable and well-balanced. But just one word of warning. On pp.30-34 Reuben suggests that the idea 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Qe2? Bc5 5. Ng5 leads to interesting play with quite promising chances for White. Don't be tempted. I think that after 5 . . . Nd4! it will yield only grief.

Problem

Two problems from one position. (A): The first comes with the requirement that White is to play and mate in 3. (B): Suppose that it is instead Black to move and that he plays **1 . . . h2**. How does White then play and mate in 3?



Solution

(A): 1. Ra2 and then if 1. . . h2 2. Rxh2; if 1. . . Kh8 2. Kg6; and if 1. . . h5 2. Ra5. (B): 1. g5 and then if 1. . . hxg5 2. Rh1; if 1. . . Kh8 2. Ra8 +; and if 1. . . h5 2. Ra6. A study by V. Slobodenyuk.

George Botterill

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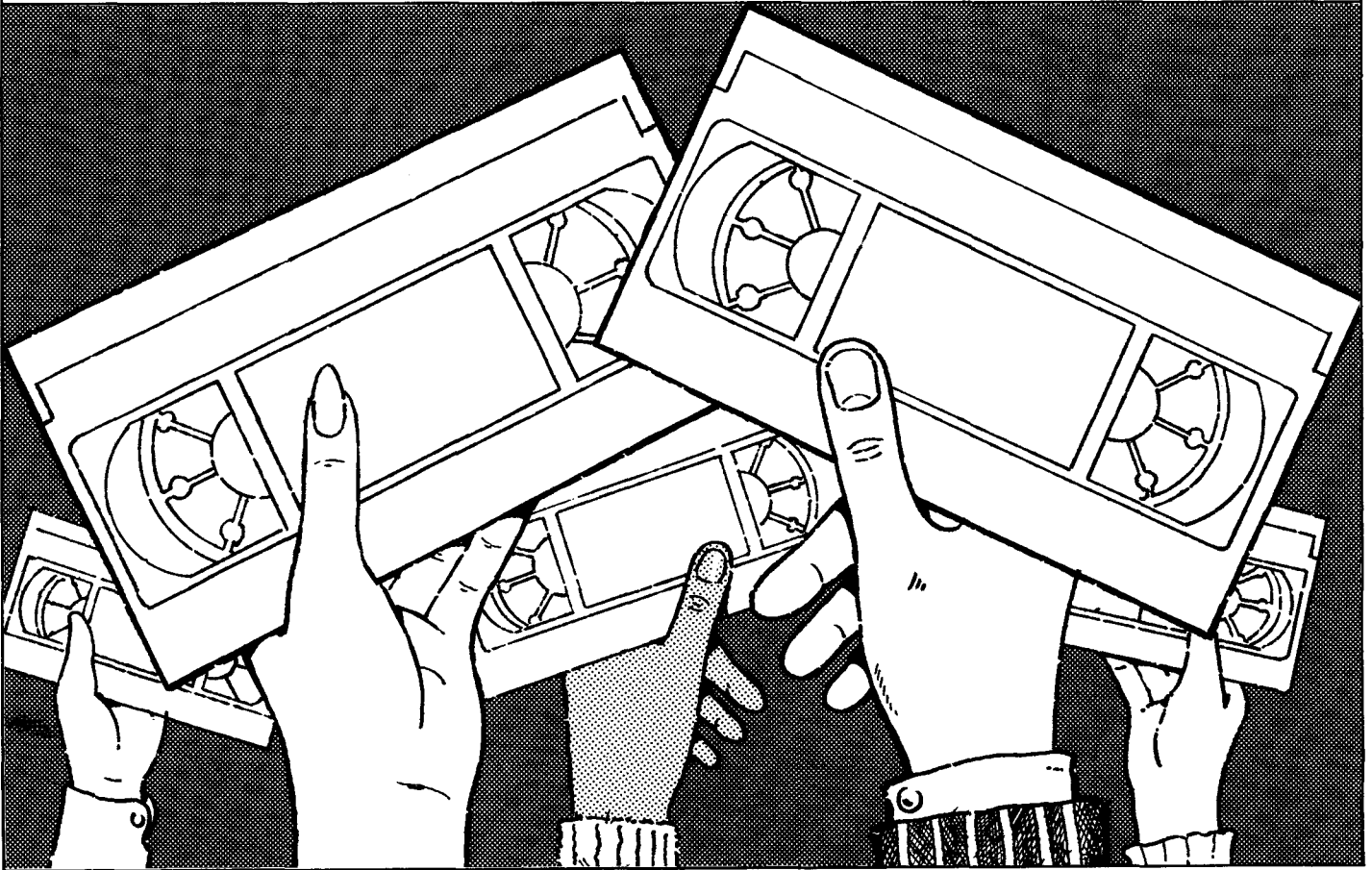
□ A man accused of using an untaxed car with false registration plates yesterday claimed that he was entitled to do so because he had renounced British citizenship in favour of Pictish nationality. — *The Scotsman* (Mr W. Waugh)

☐ Headphones for patients at Worcester Royal Infirmary have

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